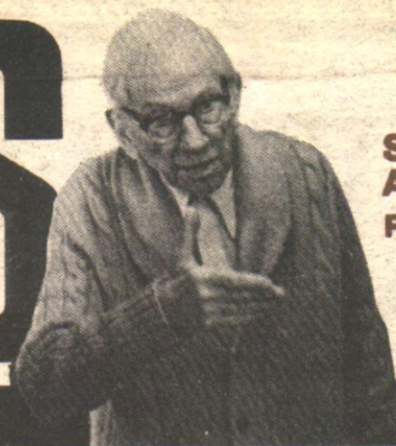


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Illustration: Tom Greenfeder

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THE INSIDE STORY



The great CIA Soviet oil blunder

By Alexander Cockburn & James Ridgeway

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On May 17 of this year, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was asked on *Meet the Press* for the Reagan administration's rationale for selling the highly advanced AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia, over the passionate objections of the Israelis and their supporters in the United States.

Weinberger, himself deeply committed to the sale, replied: [The AWACS] principal use, and the principal reason the administration is supporting the sale to the Saudis, is that it would enable them to oversee and look much further into the invasion routes of Iran and Iraq and Afghanistan, where a possible Soviet thrust to the oilfields may come. With the Soviets going to be an energy importing nation in a few years, I think that is an essential capacity to have."

But even as Weinberger once again invoked the specter of an oil-starved Soviet Union plunging toward the Gulf, he was well aware that his own Defense Intelligence Agency has long disputed this scenario, and that the Central Intelligence Agency was in the process of confessing to one of the most egregious failures of intelligence analysis of recent times—its own estimate of Soviet energy needs in this decade.

Earlier that week CIA analyst James Noren had disclosed in a seminar at Harvard that the CIA had prepared a new report conceding that the Soviet Union would have no need to import oil by the mid-1980s. Two days after Weinberger's appearance on *Meet the Press*, Bernard Gwertzman reported Noren's remarks and the existence of the new CIA estimates in the *New York Times* for May 19.

Thus disappeared one of the major rhetorical planks of the Reagan-Haig foreign policy. For both the present administration, and indeed its predecessor had proposed an impending Soviet energy crisis as the prime reason for the development of the Rapid Deployment Force and a U.S. military buildup in the Gulf region and the Indian Ocean. This view went almost undisputed throughout the 1980 election campaign, even though it seems that by the fall of last year the CIA was well aware that the predictions on which this view

was based were ludicrously wrong.

The CIA's blunder began to circulate in 1977. In that a series of reports that amounted to major modifications of intelligence estimates of Soviet economic trends. In a report called "Prospects for Soviet Oil Production," the Agency predicted that Soviet oil output would start to fall by the late '70s or early '80s and that this drop could slow the growth of total energy production. "More pessimistically," the CIA said, "the USSR will itself become an oil importer." The report added that during the '80s the Soviet Union might find itself unable to sell oil abroad, notably to its Eastern European clients, and would therefore have to compete for OPEC oil for its own use.

In a broader assessment the Agency concluded that the rate of growth of Soviet GNP was likely to decline by the early and mid-'80s to between 3 and 3.5 percent per annum and could even sink as low as 2 percent. This view was partly based on predictions of worsening problems in the energy sector.

Not everyone agreed with this dire estimate, which was instantly seized upon by the arms lobby as further justification for a major defense buildup to battle a presumed Soviet grab for new sources of oil. The Defense Intelligence Agency flatly dissented. And a major rebuttal came from the Joint Economic Committee in Congress in March 1978.

This rebuttal took the form of a staff study by Richard F. Kaufman, the committee's general counsel. On the basis of inquiries in Europe, Kaufman argued:

- Not only was the Soviet Union the world's largest producer of crude oil at the present time, but it had also the largest proven reserves of coal and natural gas. Its oil reserves were probably second only to those of Saudi Arabia, and it continued to make impressive gains in the development of its energy resources.

- In addition to supplying its own needs and those of Eastern Europe, Soviet energy exports to the West were on the increase, with oil exports worth \$5 billion in 1976.

- The boom in oil and gas pipeline construction in the Soviet Union suggested that the country was giving high priority to the energy sector. The Soviets had built 5,000 miles of pipeline in 1976 and 10,000 miles in 1977.

- The hard currency earned from oil sales to the West and the influence gained from sales to Eastern Europe were too important to Moscow to be lost by default: "Soviet leaders will probably take the policy initiatives necessary to preserve the USSR's status as a net oil exporter. Possible new actions include major increased investment in the energy sector, substitution of natural gas and other energy sources for oil, and conservation."

The blunder reversed.

Kaufman's assessment made little or no dent in Washington. The Soviet move into Afghanistan was seen, in the worsening cold war climate of late 1979 and early 1980, as but the prelude to more far-reaching incursions, all climaxing in an assault on the Middle Eastern oil jugular to the West.

In mid-1980 Senator William Proxmire held closed hearings in which he asked the DIA and the CIA for their latest views on Soviet oil production. A sanitized version of these hearings has now been released.

Frank Doe of the DIA put his agency's unchanged position straightforwardly: the Soviet Union had enough reserves and pipeline capacity to replace the declining older fields.

Some sections of the released and sanitized testimony seem to show the CIA still stubbornly sticking to

its guns—that the Soviet Union would be hunting for oil beyond its borders within five years. But experts could detect some unease among the Agency's analysts. 1980 and 1981 were crucial years in terms of the CIA's predictions. The energy production of the Soviet Union would have to start falling. But there seemed to be little sign of such a drop. At the end of last year, Soviet production statistics showed the opposite, and the figures for the first quarter of 1981 showed oil production at a dismayingly prolific 12.1 million barrels a day.

In effect, the game—so far as the CIA was concerned—was up. A new, revised report was prepared, and CIA analyst Noren disclosed its conclusions at Harvard, just barely ahead of the fierce attack on the CIA's momentous blunder by Senator Proxmire.

Why the CIA erred.

There have been similarly far-reaching errors of intelligence analysis by the CIA in the past, and many of the surges in defense spending over the last 20 years have been justified on the basis of such faulty conclusions by the Agency. But exactly how, in this miscalculation of the energy resources of the second largest economy in the world, did the Agency go wrong?

A highly knowledgeable analyst in this area suggests the following.

The CIA made two disastrously erroneous assessments of Soviet production rates and reserves. In 1977 the Agency suggested that the Soviet Union was accelerating oil production in certain fields by the technique of pumping in water to improve outflow of oil. By 1979 Soviet production patterns were not tracking with the predicted decline, and the Agency had to abort its water-pumping theory. It followed this error by computing Soviet reserves at exactly half the commonly accepted estimate.

Pondering the CIA's mistake and the DIA's success, this knowledgeable source says: "The DIA always believes in what the Soviet Union claims [i.e., its own reserve and output statistics] more than the CIA. The CIA has to be skeptical about anything the Soviet Union claims. The CIA got carried away with skepticism."

"And once the CIA decides something, it finds it hard to back down. 'If we make mistakes,' the Agency reasons, 'people will stop believing us. So don't change the estimates.' Once the CIA makes an error, it is not very good at going back on it. The CIA has got the idea you can present an estimate with the same authority as a photograph. But you can't do this."

Intelligence wars.

This latest blunder will reinforce the sizeable number of critics in Washington who argue that the CIA analytic record has been disgraceful for many years. Such criticism is of course highly politicized. In 1976 then CIA director George Bush accepted the not unreasonable contention—bitterly fought by the Agency's in-house analysts—that the CIA's estimates should be reviewed by outside experts. But the experts assembled under Professor Richard Pipes (now in the National Security Council) in the famous "Team B" were uniformly ultra-hawkish and merely fuelled the onslaught on Salt II that culminated in its shelving by President Carter in late 1979. This in-fighting is now once again in full swing. Some members of the Reagan

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Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway are columnists for the *Village Voice*, in which this article first appeared.

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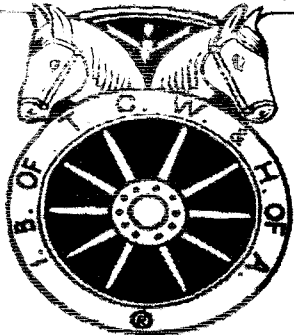
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IN THESE TIMES

The biggest does the best it can



TEAMSTERS



Roy Williams was elected Teamster President, even though he is under indictment.

By David Moberg

THE TEAMSTERS UNION IS OFTEN treated as the pariah of the American labor movement, big but bad. This contributes to a bunker mentality and blind loyalty that was evident among the 2,221 delegates to the union's 22nd constitutional convention during the first week of June, as they lashed out against the government and journalists for "baseless, unjustified attacks."

Although given the history of the union, with its questionable financial dealings and association of top leaders with organized crime figures, the image is not unfounded, it is also true that the Teamsters are less the odd man out than it appears. They represent the quintessence of American business unionism, an approach that fosters both the best and the worst in a union that is more complex than its defenders or detractors tend to acknowledge.

The Teamsters may be the biggest—some 1.9 million members in trucking, manufacturing, warehousing, services, public employment, construction, airlines and virtually every other sector of the economy—but it is not clear that it is biggest because it is best, as the convention slogan maintained.

At times it does succeed by treating unionism as simply a matter of selling labor at the best price, pursuing the narrowest of institutional interests, treating the organization as a family business of its entrepreneur-leaders and not only abandoning any vision of society as a workers' democracy but even ardently supporting the most conservative defenders of corporate capitalism. In the process it has lost the soul of unionism.

The convention gave the impression of a union sharply divided between a tiny, isolated band of reformers—perhaps 35 delegates—and a vast majority of the union who were slavishly loyal to the international union leadership. That apparent division obscures a large but silent bloc of officials who attempt to do their job as honestly and effectively as they can without crossing the dangerous line into outright opposition.

The business union outlook finds it incredible that workers might want something other than a fat paycheck out of their union. When one reporter asked Ohio-based vice-president Jackie Presser, one of the most powerful officials, if the union wasn't out of touch with needs of many young workers, Presser replied, "What young worker could do better than \$10 or \$12 an hour, 13 paid holidays, 6 weeks vacation, time and a half after 40 hours, full hospitalization with coverage for their family? Now you show

me where some young fellow will make 500 bucks a week with all that and still be a dissident. That's just not true...I don't have any problems with my membership."

Of course, most Teamsters don't have those benefits, and the numbers within the trucking industry who do are fast declining as the union is losing members and contractual gains in its traditional core. But it is within those well-paid trucking ranks that the major opposition movement has grown over the past decade. Teamsters for a Democratic Union, founded in 1976 and merged with PROD (Professional Drivers Council) last year, claims 8,000 members. The delegates they sent to Las Vegas were generally truck drivers or similar hard-core Teamsters, often with many years of experience, and they wanted more than a paycheck. Democracy, for example.

General president Roy Williams, who easily overcame TDU opponent 34-year-old dock worker Pete Camarata, running with Jack Vlahovic for secretary-treasurer in the first contested election since 1957, promised that the convention would be a "model of democracy." Despite strong sentiment from the floor to stifle any dissent, Williams generally called on dissidents at the microphones and observed the forms of democracy, partly for legal reasons (TDU has several challenges in the works on convention procedure) and partly for public relations. That alone was a victory for TDU in opening up the convention.

Such success may help bring new TDU supporters "out of the woodwork," Camarata said. "They will say, 'Hey,

these guys are really organized and willing to go down and face up to the international officials and put up these proposals for a vote even though the whole delegation and officials are against them.'"

The spirit was weak.

But if the forms of democracy were observed, the spirit and substance were missing. Dissident delegates were frequently hooted down or personally vilified on the convention floor. Outside there were roving bands of burly men brought in as an "educational project" by Jackie Presser, long regarded by the Labor Department as linked to organized crime. Some were associated with a fledgling group called BLAST, Brotherhood of Loyal Americans and Strong Teamsters, whose acronym even has hoodlum overtones. The Ohio Conference paid for airfare, hotels and meals of around 50 of these "observers." In at least one instance, a group of Presser's men surrounded Camarata as he tried to give an impromptu press conference, physically pressing up against him and challenging him to come outside for a "meeting." There were even four official guests from the U.S. Labor Party—who have worked with Republican Presser in the past—handing out their *American Labor Beacon*, which is devoted to defense of the most conservative and corrupt elements of the labor movement as part of their basically fascist politics.

More seriously, democracy was weakened in the convention votes. At the urging of the leadership, delegates revoked the right of local unions with appointed

business agents to switch to elections of their representatives, approved a new loyalty oath that includes vague prohibitions (members may "not divulge to non-members the private business of the Union, unless authorized to reveal the same"), urged passage of legislation that would permit five-year terms for local officers, and permitted the union Executive Board to name a new interim general president without having to call a special convention.

All of the TDU proposals, mainly aimed at democratization, were rejected (see *In These Times*, May 27). But even in defeat there were surprisingly strong voice votes for a couple of their proposals, including majority vote on contracts (now it takes a two-thirds vote to reject a contract). When TDU delegates proposed that strike benefits be raised higher than the administration suggested (to \$70 a week for the first four weeks instead of to \$35, and to \$90 a week subsequently instead of to \$45), several opponents echoed the sentiments of Robert Barnes of Local 301: "What the hell, we don't want to make it too fat for the guy on the picket line or he'll never go back to work." But non-TDU delegates were obviously sympathetic to the TDU proposal and even were inspired to bring up another losing, impromptu resolution to raise strike benefits annually in line with increases in cost of living.

The previous day delegates had approved massive raises (and full cost-of-living protection) for top officials, but the two contrasting measures were consistent with business unionism that emphasizes management by officials rather than action by members. The convention raised the general president's pay from \$156,250 to \$225,000 a year, the secretary-treasurer's from \$125,000 to \$200,000 and the 16 vice-presidents' from \$37,500 to \$55,000. Most international union officials have virtually unlimited expense accounts and draw simultaneous salaries for numerous positions. In 1979, according to a new TDU report, the general president made \$296,853 and Jackie Presser, with six jobs, drew \$274,278. Thirty-eight officers made over \$100,000 a year, double

Continued on page 6

For the first time since 1957, there were two candidates for Teamster president. But Pete Camarata, the dissident, got only ten votes.



Members of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) marching at the Las Vegas convention.

IN SHORT

Resolution now

Lots of good resolutions have been cropping up lately. The Baltimore City Council passed one on June 1 calling on Reagan and the Congress "to stop all aid to and withdraw all [American] advisors from El Salvador, and allow that country to decide its own future without interference from the U.S." Two Seattle union locals representing about 17,500 retail workers adopted a similar resolution; among the Salvadoran abuses they cited were the bombings of trade-union halls and the arrests and assassinations of trade unionists. In mid-June the Massachusetts house of representatives echoed the state senate's overwhelming approval of a resolution asking Reagan to propose to the Soviets a bilateral freeze on the testing, production and deployment of all nuclear warheads, missiles and delivery systems; the resolution also requests that funds saved by such an agreement be transferred to civilian use. And while not exactly pushing through a resolution, several members of the municipal government in Fresno, Calif.—not particularly noted as a hotbed of radicalism—did join a congressman and several local activists in endorsing a \$3,000 full-page ad in the *Fresno Bee* (circulation upwards of 100,000) condemning U.S. meddling in El Salvador.

The machine strikes back

After fighting City Hall for so many years, and finally beating it, Mayor Bernard Sanders of Burlington, Vt., has run into a new roadblock—call it the Board of Aldermen. Three months after his narrow election victory, the longtime left activist tried to replace the city treasurer and 18 other holdovers from the previous administration with his own people. But at the city's recent "Reorganization Day" hearings, reports Frank Kaufman, the mostly conservative Board—which shares governing power with the mayor—rejected all 19 of Sanders' appointments. At the end of the proceedings, alderman Allen Gear declared to the audience, "It's time for the mayor to know where the power lies." Another alderman accused the mayor, who ran as an independent, of using his appointments as "a method of expanding the base of the Socialist Party in Burlington." Sanders, predicting a "constitutional crisis" for the city if he can't have his way, vowed to take the matter to court.

Setback for NASSCO 3

On June 6, after only 12 hours of deliberation, a San Diego jury found all three defendants in the "NASSCO 3" trial—shipyard workers David Boyd, Rodney Johnson and Clyde Loo—guilty on all four counts of conspiracy to possess and use explosive devices. According to Jody Ansell, a freelance writer who watched a government conspiracy and cover-up unfold during the course of the trial, courtroom observers were "visibly stunned in disbelief at the verdict." (For background on the case, see *In These Times*, May 6 and May 20.) Ansell reports that defense attorneys immediately responded by renewing their request for a hearing on the motion that the case be thrown out of court because of "outrageous government conduct."

"The verdict sets several dangerous precedents, legally and politically," Ansell says, "for the government to engage in union-busting activities. Legally, this trial has for the first time given government agents the right to perform violent activities that clearly endanger the lives of innocent bystanders. Specifically, while [agent provocateur and key government witness] Ramon Barton was receiving payments from both the FBI and the San Diego Police Department, he built bombs in complete disregard for the safety of other people. Politically, this verdict represents a government attack on the movement to rebuild strong, fighting labor unions arising in the face of the present economic crisis...and raises even more questions about the extent of government union-busting at NASSCO and elsewhere."

Unfit to print, eh?

The Zodiac News Service reports that "Project Censored" has selected the El Salvador situation as the most censored story of 1980. Each year the project, which is based at Sonoma State University in California, names 10 stories that big-name jurors feel have been ignored or mishandled by the major media. El Salvador tops this year's list because it is "a prime example of how the mass media, through either misinformation or ignorance, generated public support for a misguided U.S. foreign policy that threatened to embroil America in another Vietnam war," according to project director Carl Jensen. (For a belated exception to the rule, see "Apparent Errors Cloud U.S. 'White Paper' On Reds In El Salvador," in the June 8 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*.)

—Josh Kornbluth



Jim Balanoff: "The opposition is still there."

Some Steel insurgents blame selves for losses

Steelworkers opposed to the current union administration suffered a serious setback in the May 28 elections of district officers when Jim Balanoff, director of District 31 in northern Indiana and northern Illinois, was defeated by Jack Parton, a supporter of union president Lloyd McBride. District 31, whose 110,000 members make it the largest district in the union, has been the center of opposition strength and is the home base of Ed Sadlowski, who fought McBride for leadership of the union in 1977. McBride and the other international officers were unopposed this time.

In Canada's District 6, the second largest district in the union, David Patterson—a 32-year-old president of the large Inco nickel mine in Sudbury, Ontario, and an ally of Balanoff—defeated the incumbent, Stewart Cooke, who was aligned with McBride. During the campaign, Patterson and Balanoff had linked up with three other district director candidates, Joe Samargia from the Minnesota iron range, Ron Weisen from Pittsburgh and Marvin Weinstock from the Youngstown, Ohio, area, all three of whom lost. David Wilson, the newly elected director in the Maryland district, shares some of their opposition views but was not as critical as they were of McBride.

Patterson supporters attributed his victory to his militant leadership of a successful strike at Inco that Cooke had opposed and to his advocacy of greater autonomy for Canadian workers within the union.

Balanoff increased his share of the vote in this election from 37 percent to 48 percent (four years ago he was running against four other candidates). Parton's victory—by a margin of 24,241 to 21,662, according to unofficial results—reflected a fairly even division of votes throughout the district, including the big steel locals where dissidents have traditionally been strong.

The international union officials

"concentrated on our district with money and manpower, leaned on locals, did everything they had to," Balanoff said, probably outspending him by a two to one margin. But he also blamed his loss on "apathy"—the turnout was down by more than 6,000 voters from last time—and a general conservative, fearful temperament in an era of Reaganism and rampant plant closings.

Samargia's narrow loss reflected an unexpectedly low turnout, his inability to cover all of his wide district, and his splitting votes with Linus Wampler, the incumbent and an old Sadlowski backer, against the victor, Eldon Kirsch. Samargia, president of a big iron mining local, said many members "didn't feel that just voting in one director was going to change anything." But he, like many activists in Balanoff's district, faulted the opposition movement itself for the weakness. "Our mistake in '77 was that Steelworkers Fight Back [the Sadlowski campaign operation] didn't stay alive. You need an organization. I don't think the losses would have occurred if Fight Back would have stayed alive."

Dissidents still plan to build an organization, although Balanoff has not yet decided what he will do when he steps down in three months. They will face several tough elections next spring to keep their hold on locals where they are now in power. "The opposition is still there," Balanoff says. "Let's take a look a little later in the ballgame."

—David Moberg

Equal pay hits San Jose

SAN JOSE, CA—Municipal workers in San Jose have won an historic agreement with city officials to bargain on raising the wages of secretaries, nurses and other female-dominated job categories

that are traditionally underpaid. Local 101 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Workers (AFSCME)—which represents some 2,000 clerical, technical, professional and custodial workers in San Jose, the nation's fastest growing city—had made equal pay for work of comparable value a top priority in its new contract, voting to walk out if necessary to resolve the issue. In early May, less than 24 hours before what would have been the first strike in the nation over the issue of "comparable worth," the city backed down from its earlier refusal to negotiate wage adjustments.

The union got started on the issue of pay equity in 1977 when a group of rank-and-file women formed an affirmative action committee to address sex discrimination in the pay and personnel practices of the city. Following a one-day sick-out, the city agreed to hire Hay Associates, a nationally-known personnel consulting firm, to conduct an in-depth evaluation of city job classifications. Working in conjunction with a joint worker-management committee, Hay Associates ranked each job category on the basis of know-how, problem solving, accountability and working conditions.

The results of the exhaustive, 18-month study confirmed what the union had contended: that there is a pattern of pay discrimination among city workers on the basis of sex. The Hay study shows that jobs held mostly by women are paid 10 to 25 percent (or up to \$5,000 a year) less than jobs of comparable difficulty and worth done primarily by men. For instance, Accounting Clerk II, a predominantly female job classification, pays \$335 a month less than the equally-ranked but predominantly male job of Aircraft Refueler. An Executive Secretary is paid \$470 a month less than an Electrical Inspector—even though both are judged by the study to be of equal value to the city.

City officials contend that the city is paying the prevailing marketplace wages; and the Hay study shows that San Jose does, in fact, pay slightly better than similar jurisdictions. But Local 101 business agent Bill Callahan points out that the prevailing wage system—"comparing the depressed wages of clericals here with the depressed wages of clericals elsewhere"—merely perpetuates the effects of sex discrimination. "Women are tired of being told they've got to become carpenters to make a decent wage," Callahan continues. "They want to have the equal opportunity to work as nurses or librarians and be paid equitably for their contribution to the workplace."

The City of San Jose will find it awkward, if not downright embarrassing, to refuse the union's demands. While arguing about the cost of implementation, the city doesn't dispute the conclusions of the Hay study and, in fact, has already used the findings as the basis for raising management salaries. San Jose mayor Janet Gray Hayes, who heads a majority-female city council in this self-proclaimed "feminist capital of the U.S.," has publicly stated her support for the principle of pay equity for women.

The union, meanwhile, is cautiously optimistic about the prospects for a settlement before the new strike deadline of July 5, when the old contract expires.

—James F. Bond

IN THE NATION

NEW YORK



Brooklyn Assembly member Frank Barbaro has a long history of left politics. Fiorello La Guardia is his model, and like La Guardia his chances are slim on this first time out.

Koch opponent enters race

By Elizabeth Weiner

NEW YORK

FRANK J. BARBARO, A DEMOCRATIC state Assemblyman from Brooklyn who has been described as a populist, anarchist, hothead, free-thinker and dissident, has accepted the challenge of opposing Ed Koch in the race for mayor of New York City next fall. Leftists in search of a candidate have cheered Barbaro's decision, and groups are quickly joining forces to launch his campaign. But even the most ardent Koch-haters warn that this well-financed, media-mongering incumbent will be almost impossible to beat.

A five-term assemblyman from a Jewish and Italian section of Brooklyn called Bensonhurst, Barbaro has consistently defied the Brooklyn Democratic political machine and, until recently, functioned on the fringe of the state legislature. An unswerving leftist, he has alienated even some liberal Democrats and, according to some observers, suffers from being outside the strong Manhattan sphere of influence in city politics.

Barbaro appears undaunted by the historical obstacles to a candidacy like his and instead invokes a different history. He likens himself to Fiorello La Guardia, the popular mayor of the '30s who ran against Tammany Hall and pulled together the diverse ethnic groups of the city. Already closely identified with Italian-American voters, Barbaro hopes to build a coalition of blacks, Hispanics and other working class New Yorkers to counter "the attitude of racial conflict that Koch is trying to exploit."

Well-known as a pro-tenant legislator from a district where many elderly people live, often in their own homes or in public housing, Barbaro started out his campaign on a tenants' rights platform. "One of the most divisive biases of the Koch administration," he said in his announcement speech in mid-May, "is its favor of those who own the real estate

empires of New York...while millions of dollars of tax breaks have been given to luxury hotel builders, tens of thousands of small property owners have suffered from ever-increasing real estate taxes."

Pointing to the corporations and the banks as the true villains of the city's fiscal woes, Barbaro promises to lead an attack against corporate power. He denounced Koch's Republicanism—Koch is running in both the Democratic and Republican primaries—and decries Reagan's national policies.

"Picking on the poor may be popular and pragmatic," he said, "but I won't cut my political views to fit this year's fashions."

Barbaro's past is offered up by his supporters as proof that he knows how to fight. A longshoreman on the Brooklyn docks for 15 years, Barbaro was active in the rank-and-file struggle to clean up the waterfront. He put himself through law school at night and started a practice in labor law in 1967 at the age of 40. A tenants-rights and anti-war candidate for the Assembly since the late '60s, he finally beat the political machine in 1972.

Once in state government, Barbaro challenged the leadership—his old-time political rivals from Brooklyn who have traditionally ruled Albany (viz., Governor Carey)—and earned a reputation as a left-wing partisan by such actions as sponsoring a resolution, in 1976 at the height of the Bicentennial fervor, to honor Sacco and Vanzetti as patriotic Americans. The then-Speaker of the Assembly, Stanley Steingut, his personal nemesis, killed the proposal with a bang of his gavel.

Since his appointment as chairman of the Labor Committee in the Assembly, Barbaro has been able to take some effective action. In 1980, he carried through into law a controversial bill that extended occupational health and safety standards to public employees. And he has exposed the misuse of Medicaid funds by nursing homes for union-busting purposes.

Can a fiery assemblyman from a corner of Brooklyn, whose constituents

number one half of those in a single city council district, capture City Hall? Jim Sleeper, special assistant to Carol Bellamy, City Council President, posed that question and a few others. "There's always an Italian candidate in the mayoral race who gets 17 percent of the vote, representing the Italian working class, which feels betrayed by the slick Manhattan liberals," Sleeper said. "How can Barbaro break out of that image of another Italian rebel from the boroughs?"

"If the campaign isn't carefully run," Sleeper went on, "it will bring out the Manhattan white snobism. On the other side, coming from the left, he could even

lose the Italian vote." He added that "Koch has played the politics of racism so well," wooing the white homeowner class at the expense of minorities, that he has made a multi-racial appeal difficult.

Another city politics buff, Doug Tsuruoka, a former legislative aide in the state assembly and a Brooklyn resident, worried about Barbaro's relationship to the political machinery. "There are so many political mafias that run this city," Tsuruoka explained. "The Manhattan Democratic Clubs call the shots on who's a credible candidate and who's not. They've made a sort of Machiavellian decision that Koch is unbeatable, even if they don't support him."

Meanwhile, Barbaro won the endorsement, on May 31, of the New Democratic Coalition, a statewide group of reform clubs with 8,000 members. Although it represents a significant setback for Koch, many people agree that Koch's vindictiveness has scared off many potential supporters.

The committed are optimistic. "This is not a typical political race," says Terry Rooney, Barbaro's campaign manager. "Koch is able to generate so much negative feeling, that it has created unusual conditions. The anti-Koch feeling must be translated into a pro-Barbaro position, but it's there. We have to pull it together."

Encouraged by growing support from trade unions, such as District 1199, the hospital workers union; some locals of District Council 37, the public employees union; the Citywide Coalition to Defeat Koch in 1981, made up of tenants groups, the Citizens Party, the Black United Front, the new Alliance Party and others, the Barbaro camp talks of building a grassroots coalition that will reach all five boroughs through street organizing and storefront offices.

Even if Barbaro loses, Rooney says, the race will have an impact. "By doing well, we will give a signal to the country that the Democratic Party is not going to swing to the right," he said. "But," he quickly added, "we're going to win."

Dominick Melluzzo, a resident of Bensonhurst who runs a T.V. repair shop on a commercial street dotted with Italian pastry shops where pizza and homemade Italian ices are the common fare, knows Frank Barbaro from way back. He praised Barbaro as a "conscientious" leader who takes care of his constituency, fighting landlords, keeping the area clean, helping the senior citizens.

"I'd vote for Frank," Melluzzo said, "but there's the question of how effective he'd be city-wide. Koch is a sharp boy," he cautioned, peering over his bifocals.

"But if Koch wins without any opposition, we'll really be in for it. Barbaro doesn't have much experience, but the underdog can make a difference."

Elizabeth Weiner writes regularly for *In These Times*.

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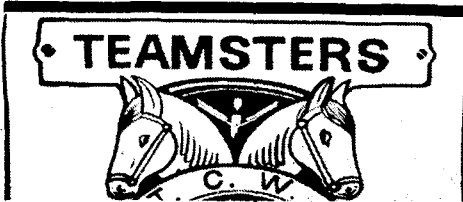
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Continued from page 3
the number in the rest of the labor movement combined.

Williams is solidly in the business union mold. "He's a bread and butter trade unionist, pretty much confined to wages, working conditions, pensions and health and welfare," vice-president Harold Gibbons said. "I think that's the limit of his horizons as far as collective bargaining."

In the important master freight agreement coming up next year, Williams, who has directed the national freight division since 1974, is expected to grant concessions on work rules, such as flexible starting times and to ease wage demands. Presser predicted that the union's response to the industry problems, a combined result of greater competition as deregulation starts, a sluggish economy and higher fuel prices, will be "relief in some areas, holding the line in others."

Camarata was critical of the relief already granted: flexible work weeks that mean members can be forced to work weekends at straight pay, special commodity riders that effectively reduce drivers' pay, expansion of lower-wage "new-hire" provisions, more forced

overtime and failure to enforce payment of the contractual cost-of-living increases.

The turmoil in the trucking industry has meant a loss of 200,000 Teamster jobs in the past year, Presser said. Although TDU wants to unleash the membership in a massive organizing drive, their resolution calling for that was defeated.

The Teamsters under Williams are, however, likely to accelerate organizing. (Currently they win about 30 percent of all union elections, although they have 10 percent of union membership, but many of those elections are at very small workplaces and over recent years their rate of success has been several percentage points below that of unions in general.) But the emphasis will not be on trucking. The formal jurisdiction in the constitution was expanded to include "office, technical and professional employees, health care employees, agricultural employees, public employees, and industry employees," although Teamsters already are active in all those areas. A special Public Employee Assistance Fund was also set up.

The new organizing thrust could lead to greater conflict with AFL-CIO unions. Teamster desires to avoid any infringement on their nearly universal organizing range are at least part of the reason for the apparently solid opposition to re-affiliation with the AFL-CIO among

executive board members. (The no-raid pact with the United Farm Workers in California appears not to be in jeopardy, since the Teamsters are looking mainly to Texas, Florida and Arizona for agricultural workers.)

As a result, the long-haul truckers may disappear from the Teamsters. "Trucking industry deregulation may wipe out, with the exception of four or five big companies, the Teamster union from the entire industry," Gibbons said. "We'll still have outfits like United Parcel. We'll still have the car haulers. But the over-the-road trucker and the city cartage guy is, I suspect, in five years going to be a vanishing person in the union."

Williams is not regarded by fellow executive board members as such a dyed-in-the-wool conservative as former president Frank Fitzsimmons, who led Teamster endorsements of Nixon and Reagan. Yet he effusively praised Reagan's economic programs as laid out by two low-level White House representatives. They accompanied a brief film message from Reagan that avoided mentioning Williams but did say that he wanted to "team with the Teamsters." Some Teamsters saw the Reagan delegation as a snub and despite the appointment of the Teamster's choice as head of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Teamster officials could claim no commitment from Reagan on their top priority—stopping trucking deregulation.

"I think that the pragmatism of Roy Williams will dominate his political thinking," Gibbons said. "He will attack Reagan where Reagan has to be attacked and he will support him in areas where he thinks it will be good for the union." Although many delegates, especially blacks and those from lower-wage industries were critical of Reagan but careful to avoid appearing to disagree with their leaders, there was sympathy and a wait-and-see attitude from others. "His policies could take several years to see what results will come," alternate Richard Bruchshlagel from Cleveland said. "At least he's making an attempt. I've worked all my life. A lot of people have depended on these programs rather than their own efforts." Only a minority on the executive board appears to share new vice-president Donald Peters' view that Reagan is "cutting programs that affect the poor, senior citizens, and the underprivileged. He's put too much emphasis on armaments."

Private reservations.

Conversations with delegates revealed that many were privately concerned about Williams' recent indictment and reports of mob connections, uncomfortable with the unions' official political endorsements, and a little sympathetic to some of the TDU proposals if not to TDU itself. But very few were willing to make public statements. "They're too big for me," one east coast local president said. "They can hurt me and the people I represent."

It's like a story my father told, one hardworking, left-leaning organizer explained. Back in the old country, his uncle and grandfather were tending their fields one day when a messenger on a horse rode up. The uncle talked to him, then rushed excitedly to tell his father the news: the old Balkan kingdoms had all been united under one king of the south Slavs. The old man looked up sternly, then slapped his son across the face. "What do we care who is king?" he shouted. "Go back and plow your field."

So when Roy Williams is elected president (with ten dissenting votes registered) despite an indictment on bribery charges, despite a Senate subcommittee's accusations that he has violated his fiduciary responsibilities as a union officer by refusing to testify, despite numerous reports of close ties with organized crime, despite being forced from his trusteeship of the Central States Pension Fund because of mismanagement, despite pending grand jury investigations elsewhere, the well-meaning officials within the Teamsters go back to plowing their fields.

"You have three choices," says Vlahovic, a one-time business agent later elected head of the largest local in Canada until he was forced out by the international. "Accept things as they are, keep your mouth shut and keep your salary. Or you can quit. Or you can stand up and fight for what you know is right." Maybe 30 to 40 percent of the local unions in the Teamsters are good, he says, but at this point few of those leaders are willing to risk the kinds of attacks made on Vlahovic.

Others manage to operate in a schizophrenic environment: Willie Whelan won his 1978 insurgent campaign for president of the New York milk truck drivers local and led a militant strike that succeeded despite other Teamsters hauling in milk as a favor to Whelan's defeated opponent and pressure from the international to make a deal. Although still "leery" of the international leadership, he also praises the technical assistance he gets from the international. Although he wants the union to be more militant and more democratic and opposed Reagan, TDU "doesn't appeal to me" because he doesn't see it building a base and winning positions of power but instead trying to "topple the organization."

The business unionism of the Teamsters will be put to some severe tests in the next few years from internal and external pressures, from economic upheavals and political/legal travail. If the active reformers and the more cautious "plow-your-field" survivors could unite, there is within the big, bad Teamsters a faint heart of unionism that means more than business as usual. It could beat again. ■

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DEMOCRATS

The Party is cutting popular input

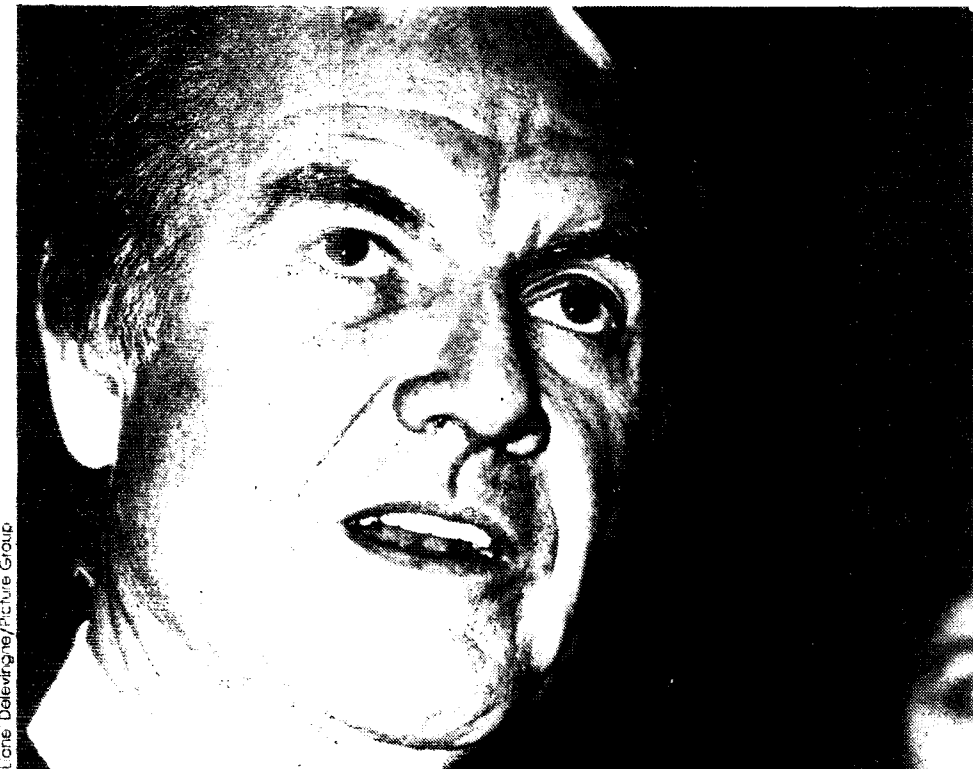
By John Judis

THERE IS LITTLE DISAGREEMENT among Democrats that their party is in need of emergency relief. But there is considerable disagreement about what form that relief should take.

In Denver, June 5, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) decided by a three-to-one vote of its 372 members to limit drastically the scope and purpose of its midterm convention. While the majority claimed that the convention was too expensive, the minority argued that it was essential to reviving the party.

McGovern legacy.

The midterm convention was a product of the 1972 Democratic convention, which nominated George McGovern for President. The midterm convention, with delegates elected from each congressional district, was supposed to build grassroots support for the party and to provide a forum where the party could debate issues.



The midterm convention was part of the reforms brought in in 1972, when George McGovern (above) won the Democratic presidential nomination. Charles Mannatt (right) has now undermined this reform.

At the first midterm convention, in Kansas City in 1974, minority and women delegates successfully fought back an attempt by some labor and local Democratic leaders to gut the party's affirmative action guidelines. At Memphis in 1978, a fierce battle erupted over the Carter administration's domestic and foreign policy, foreshadowing the primary contest between Carter and Sen. Edward Kennedy in 1980.

Many Democratic politicians and AFL-CIO leaders subsequently blamed the 1978 Midterm for fomenting party disunity. They argued that a more unified party might have been able to beat Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Party reformers, on the other hand, have argued that the 1974 and 1978 midterm conventions did what they were supposed to do: broaden the active participation of groups and individuals in the party and encourage policy debate.

The midterm's future was raised at the 1980 Democratic National Convention. The delegates there affirmed that two-thirds of the midterm delegates be elected from congressional districts and that the midterm convention be devoted to the discussion of "public policy issues with Democratic officeholders, experts, and leaders of the Democratic constituency groups." The midterm seemed secure at least through 1984.

But Charles Mannatt, who was elected DNC chair last February, initiated another revision of the midterm process. And this time the opponents of the midterm had a veto. With \$800,000 in debts still owed by the party from the 1980 election, the DNC seemed to be in poor

shape to put on another multi-million dollar convention next year.

Gutted convention.

Last April, a task force headed by party vice-chairman Lynn Cutler submitted its recommendation. The task force proposed that the convention be cut in half, with none of the delegates elected locally. Instead, the delegates would consist of existing DNC members, delegates chosen

The midterm convention has been reduced in size and delegates will no longer be elected by constituents.

large seats on the DNC, was lined up behind Mannatt's proposal. At an April AFL-CIO executive committee meeting, President Lane Kirkland had won unanimous support for the Mannatt proposal.

The Machinists' William Winpisinger had been expected to dissent, but decided at the last minute not to contest Kirkland on the midterm issue.

The Mannatt proposal was also backed by Mayor Richard Hatcher and Rep. Mickey Leland, the chair of the DNC's black caucus. Hatcher and Leland were reportedly won over by Mannatt's pledge to ensure minority representation.

In the debate at the DNC meeting,



most delegates who favored the Mannatt proposal cited the cost of past midterm conventions, but privately complained that the last convention had only sown disunity among Democrats. Those in favor of keeping the present midterm argued that the expenses of the convention could be reduced.

Primaries next.

"The impression one gets is that the leadership is still confused as to how to rebuild the party," the Democratic Agenda's Ben Tofoya said. But the differences over the midterm convention do suggest two rival strategies.

One strategy, favored by AFL-CIO COPE and some other labor Democrats, is to strengthen the national party's control over local Democrats and over the nominating process, even at the expense of the primaries. These Democrats want a return to the "golden age" of the pre-1972 party.

The other strategy, favored by the "liberal/progressive" reformers, is to encourage decentralization, intraparty democracy and political debate as a means of building a genuine popular and activist following for the Democrats. These Democrats see the 1972 party, with a broader social base, as a model.

The labor Democrat's strategy could turn the Democrats into a replica of the labor movement, with uncontested leadership but a dwindling and indifferent base. The reformers, on the other hand, risk spending their time on efforts that won't really affect elections—unless the party does finally gut the primary system. As McGovern showed in 1972 and Reagan showed in 1980, elections are not won by party organizations, but by candidates and movements.

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PANTHEON



TERRORISTS

Cuban exiles are acquitted in retrial for Letelier murder

By Peter Kornbluh
and Eliana Loveluck

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ON MAY 30, A JURY HERE ACQUITTED two Cuban exiles, Alvin Ross Diaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, in a retrial on charges they conspired to murder former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier.

As Ross was leaving the courtroom, he told reporters that he now planned to "put my life together, start working, and try to overthrow Castro."

The acquittal of Ross and Novo probably marks the last act of the Letelier assassination case. The verdict amounts to a victory for the Cuban exile movement, the Chilean government and Reagan administration foreign policy.

For Letelier's friends and supporters in the U.S., the verdict was a bitter disappointment, which has also brought fear of reprisals. Referring to Letelier's former colleagues at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), Guillermo Novo had been overheard in the courtroom corridor to say, "We have to stamp out the communists, all of them, like cockroaches, especially those in the court."

Christians to the lions.

Orlando Letelier was the head of the Transnational Institute, an IPS project, and a vocal opponent of the Pinochet regime. When a bomb exploded in his car on Sept. 21, 1976, killing him and an associate, Ronni Moffitt, some Pinochet supporters in the U.S., like *National Review's* Kevin Lynch, suggested that his murder was done by a "left-wing group intent on disrupting Chile's relations with the U.S."

But several years of investigations, both by the Justice Department and by IPS researchers, pointed toward the direct role of Chile's secret police, the DINA, in ordering Letelier's assassination. The DINA's role was confirmed by Michael Vernon Townley, an American who admitted he was hired by the DINA to plan the assassination. As a result of Townley's plea-bargaining confession, seven others were indicted, including four Cuban exiles from the Cuban Nationalist Movement (CNM), DINA director Manuel Contreras and two other officials of the DINA.

Two of the exiles were never apprehended. And the Chilean government refused to try or to extradite the DINA

officials. But in February 1979, Townley, Ross and Novo were found guilty by a Washington court. For his cooperation, Townley was sentenced to 10 years, while the two Cubans were sentenced to life.

The Carter administration terminated military sales and export-import bank loans to Chile to protest the government's protection of the DINA officials. It looked as though the Letelier assassi-

by charging that he was a double agent, working for the CIA as well as DINA, and that Townley was attempting to embarrass both the Chilean government and the Cuban exile movement. This time both the prosecution and the defense agreed that DINA ordered the assassination. But the defense charged that the Chileans, through Townley, were using the Cubans as "scapegoats"—the defense claimed Ross and Novo were "Christians thrown to the lions."

The introduction of a taped telephone conversation between Townley and a friend in Chile became an important part of the defense. In the conversation, Townley described the judge, Barrington Parker Jr., a black, with racial epithets, and suggested that his friends make threatening phone calls to Parker in order to get him to withdraw from the case.

In the first trial, Judge Parker had ruled that the tape, which was reportedly made in Chile and sent to the defense by accused DINA head Contreras, was inadmissible as evidence. But in the second trial, Parker allowed partial transcripts to be read to the jury of nine blacks, two whites and one Puerto Rican. He re-

killing Letelier, the prosecution also called former Senator George McGovern and Dutch Parliamentarian Relus ter Beek. One of Letelier's last acts before his death, according to ter Beek, was a successful campaign to convince the Dutch government to cancel a \$60 million investment in Chile.

But the prosecution again relied on Townley's testimony to make the link between the Cubans and the murder. Townley recalled meeting with Novo and Ross and other members of the CNM on Sept. 9 and 10 to discuss their participation in the assassination. According to Townley, the Cubans wanted Chile to provide them with a headquarters for a government in exile, a location to train for terrorist attacks and a sanctuary from American law in exchange for their assistance.

But what seemed to captivate both judge and jury was Townley's account of the assassination itself. Townley said that after he heard that the bomb had gone off as planned and killed Letelier, he had a "celebration meal."

"What?" Judge Parker said unbelievably.

"Sell-uh-bray-shun," Townley repeated, thinking that the judge hadn't heard him.

"What?" the judge asked again.

"Oh, I guess a kind of macabre celebration," Townley said.

In his closing statements, Barcella tried to show how the CNM was seeking closer links with the Pinochet government. (Earlier he had read a letter from Novo to a Chilean government official that said, "The CNM has intrepidly defended the best interests of the Pinochet government in every way public and private.")

And he told the jury that they had to figure out what Michael Townley had been doing in Union City, N.J., the headquarters of the CNM. After all, Barcella reminded the jury, Union City is not much of a tourist attraction.

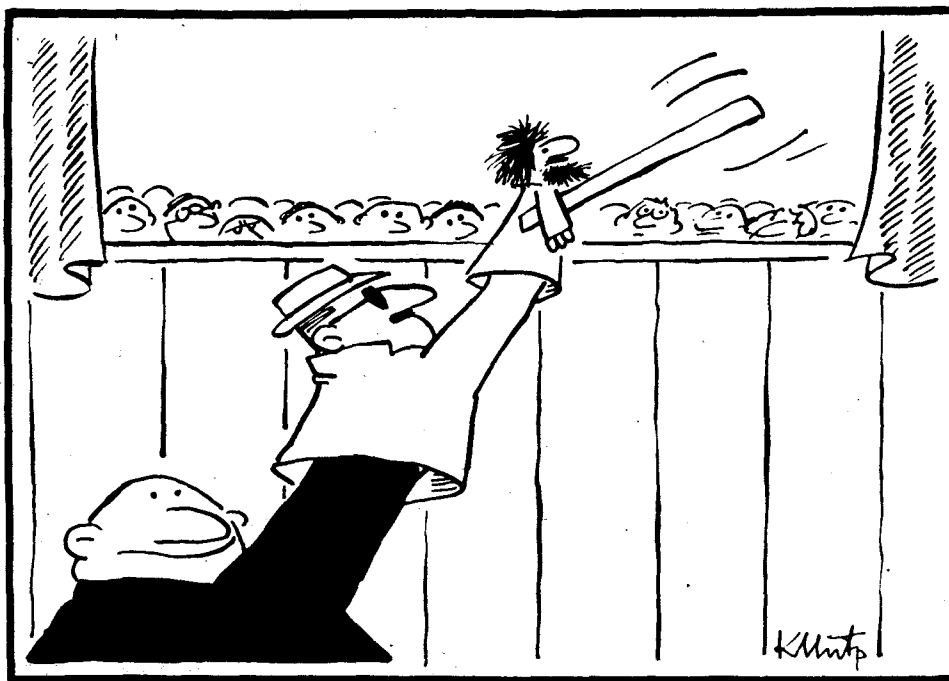
Contradictory verdict.

Ross and Novo were acquitted on the conspiracy charge. But the jury found Novo guilty on two counts of perjury for telling a grand jury that he had no knowledge of the murder conspiracy or of the DINA's role in the murder.

The jury's seemingly contradictory verdict suggests that sentiment outweighed reason in its three-week deliberations on the case. Saul Landau, the co-author of *Assassination on Embassy Row*, speculates that the jury might have been unable to stand the idea of Ross and Novo going to jail for life, with the cold-blooded Townley likely to be released in December 1984.

In any event, of the eight persons originally indicted for what the D.C. Court of Appeals called "one of the most monstrous international crimes in recent history," all except Townley are free. One witness during the trial recalled the challenge uttered by Virgilio Paz, one of the CNM members never apprehended, "We did it. So what. Let them prove it."

Peter Kornbluh and Eliana Loveluck are on the staff of the Institute for Policy Studies.



Of the eight suspects originally indicted for this "monstrous crime," all but one are now free.

nation, which was intended to stifle opposition to the Pinochet regime, had only heightened it.

But last fall, a D.C. Court of Appeals threw out the Cubans' convictions because of inadmissible evidence. And this winter, the Reagan administration, following its policy of "quiet diplomacy," responded to recent reports of torture in Chile by removing the sanctions, withdrawing the extradition requests and undertaking joint American-Chilean naval maneuvers.

Chile's role affirmed.

In the Cubans' first trial, their lawyers, Lawrence Dubin and Paul Goldberger, had tried to impugn Townley's testimony

fused, however, to let the prosecution argue before the jury that the tape had originated in Chile or present the testimony of a Watergate tape expert that the tape had been spliced in six places.

A celebration.

As in the first trial, the prosecution, led by Assistant District Attorney E. Lawrence Barcella, reconstructed for the jury the broader events leading up to the assassination, beginning with the 1973 coup that toppled Chilean President Salvador Allende. Both Michael Moffitt, the husband of Ronni Moffitt, and Isabel Letelier, the wife of Orlando Letelier, testified.

To establish the Chilean motive for

CIA

Continued from page 2

transition team inspecting the CIA at the start of this year, most notably former congressional intelligence committee staffer Angelo Cordova, were harshly critical of CIA analysis and recommended a brusque spring-cleaning. This challenge was fought off.

But the semi-secret struggle has continued. Leaks, attributed to "CIA insiders" suggest that new CIA chief William Casey is trying to "politicize" the Agency in the interests of the Reagan administration. A recent CIA report, discounting Soviet backing for worldwide terrorist subversion, was an insultingly direct assault on the Reagan-Haig claim to the contrary and was touted by the "insiders" as just the sort of work a CIA immune to political dictate could produce. In sum, the CIA's

regulars were courting public opinion, against any onslaught by Reagan's men.

Data-free doctrine.

The Great Soviet oil blunder has therefore produced some entrancing ironies. The Reagan administration is showing little eagerness to pounce upon the CIA regulars for this mistake, for an oil-hungry Soviet Union is crucial to Reagan-Haig foreign policy rhetoric. The Israeli lobby opposing the sale of the AWACS to Saudi Arabia will be similarly loath to argue that the revised estimates of Soviet oil output disprove Weinberger's main argument for the AWACS sale, for the lobby takes as an axiom the need for continuing total support of Israel as the U.S.' main bastion against Soviet expansionism in the Middle East.

In short, if there had not been a Soviet energy crisis it would have been necessary to invent it. There is—as the CIA admits—no such crisis, but the need for invention remains.



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Campaign for Economic Democracy

CALIFORNIA

CED looks ahead with confidence

By Thomas Brom

REDWOOD CITY, CA

SEVERAL HUNDRED ACTIVISTS of the Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED) lay sprawled in the sun after a Memorial Day weekend session of Jane Fonda's "Workout" exercises, softball and a lunch of spinach quiche, 3-bean salad and fruit. Gathered at the hilltop campus of La Canada college for CED's second statewide conference, they were intent on parlaying electoral victories this spring in Santa Monica and Chico into takeover of the California Democratic Party.

The truly remarkable thing about this conference, however, is that the state Democratic Party leadership is also here, eating "trail mix," offering counsel and asking to be saved from political disaster.

CED's tanned young army had done its work well in the past five years. Created in 1976 following Tom Hayden's run

Despite mixed results this year, Hayden's crew looks good to the Democrats.

for U.S. Senate, the group quickly became a dynamic force in left Democratic politics. It helped elect some 60 local officials with an organization of 350 activists and 22 chapters scattered throughout California. Most recently, it marshalled 300 members for precinct work in Santa Monica, contributing to an electoral sweep in April and the first CED city council majority ever.

At the state Democratic convention in January, CED was the largest voting bloc with more than 300 delegates and 90 alternates. As a result, six of the 10 top Democratic Party officers in the state are either members of CED or were elected because of CED endorsement. They include the state chair and vice chair, both the Northern California and Southern California chair and Northern California secretary Jack Trujillo, a CED member.

"The Democratic Party in California is not an organization," says one party activist. "Because of electoral reforms made early in the century, there are no big city machines, no party endorsements in the primaries, and no patronage system. The bonds within the party are very weak."

Trujillo adds, "There is really very little ideological difference between us. Opposition to CED has more to do with distrust of its methods and of Tom Hayden personally. But the party is now amenable to any relationship that CED wants."

Much of the state's Democratic Party leadership seemed to agree. The Southern California executive director and party secretary hosted one workshop at the CED conference, state party treasurer and CED member John Means another and two Northern California officials a third. Former Democratic Assemblyman Charles Warren of Los Angeles was also a headline speaker, outlining the

need for energy conservation and resource planning in the coming decade.

All the attention, however, made some CED members a bit nervous. "We can't be too eager to prove ourselves, or the corporate liberals in the party will absorb us," cautioned Dennis Zane, newly elected Santa Monica city councilmember.

CED chair Tom Hayden apparently has no doubts. In the keynote speech of the conference, he defined the organization's task as "rebuilding the Democratic Party nationally, beginning in California."

That task included installing economic democracy as the guiding philosophy of the party, making that philosophy work in cities like Santa Monica, and pushing the state administration to complete CED-inspired reforms before Governor Brown's term expires in 1983. It also includes, Hayden told a rhythmically-clapping audience, strengthening the statewide CED network and "proving that Mr. Hayden here can be elected to political office."

Although he refuses to discuss his own campaign plans, Hayden is reportedly interested in running for Secretary of State or for an Assembly seat if reapportionment opens a district in the Santa Monica area. "We'll make a decision in less than a year," he told me.

A narrow base.

For all of CED's ambition and recent achievement at the polls, however, it is built on a very narrow political base. Most members are recruited directly from college campuses, on such issues as energy conservation, solar power, anti-nuke campaigns, rent control and planned urban growth. They are overwhelmingly young, white and suburban. The strongest chapters tend to be in smaller cities, where CED is one of the few outlets for youthful political idealism. Hay-

den and a small group of old CED hands help shape and direct that idealism, but they cannot hide the earnest naivete of the membership.

San Diego CED activist Barbara Filner, a field representative of the Southwest Border Regional Commission, said she joined CED searching for the possibility of "holistic politics," joining the political, economic, social and spiritual. She voiced a common theme at the conference by criticizing CED for not preparing candidates for "what to do after we've won."

CED elected officials manage to be disarmingly open about their political doubts. In Santa Monica councilmembers now have their first chance to implement CED programs at the local level. So far, they have set about the task with skill

and determination, halting private development for six months and putting a neighborhood planning system into place.

"We even had the audacity," said planning commissioner Derek Shearer, "to suggest that young housing speculators who complained of losing money should go out and find a decent job."

Shearer is regarded as the inventor of "economic democracy," a slogan that covers a program of social control of capital and economic planning that would be called "social democracy" anywhere in Europe. He, Prof. Richard Flacks of Santa Barbara and Prof. G. William Domhoff of Santa Cruz understand the political choices behind the program. Many CED members are not so well grounded.

Continued on page 22



Long-time Campaign for Economic Democracy staffer Bonnie Ladin addressing CED's second state-wide conference in Redwood City.

Tom Hayden: testing the limits

You have talked about putting together a new governing coalition that would be influenced but not controlled by the left. Could you expand on CED's role in that coalition?

I think the problem is that there is a vacuum both at the center, which used to be occupied by the traditional New Deal liberal programs, and there's a vacuum on the left. The question is how you fill both vacuums. CED is trying to build a progressive agenda and organization, but it can't just be concerned with the left side of the spectrum. It has to be concerned with the vacancy at the center. Otherwise the Republicans occupy the center.

What we're trying to do is find a way to have it both ways—to be both the cutting edge and to try to encourage a new middle ground in politics to replace the New Deal.

I think an example would be that CED is inclined toward a very decentralized solar energy program, but at the same time we've lobbied the big centralized utilities to give loans to consumers. We are for employee control of pension funds, but we have worked with investment bankers and others—city officials, pension fund managers—to get pension funds moved into affordable housing.

I think we have to approach all the

questions that way, until there's a new concept at the center of American politics beyond the New Deal. Some new partnership between labor, government and business, with more worker participation to revive the economy. It will include a positive role for government, trying to deal with the energy crisis, foreign competition, setting tax and investment policies so that we can rehabilitate steel and auto.

Aren't you now jumping into the role of repairing capitalism? Soon you'll be in partnership with Felix Rohatyn.

I met with Felix Rohatyn. That's part of the dilemma of trying to build a movement that's progressive and on the cutting edge and at the same time is concerned about cementing some new center in American politics beyond the New Deal.

I liked what you said about "repairing capitalism." Because I think you do have to take the system as far as it will go. I don't think you can argue, as I once did and others have done, that a system should be replaced wholesale until it has exhausted its possibilities.

American capitalism has a way to go. There are other capitalist countries—Japan, West Germany, Sweden—that are more productive than the United

States, and that have a higher level of social justice. Unemployment compensation, welfare. We should at least try to achieve that level of higher productivity and better social programs.

You are interested in promoting those possibilities?

They are some of the possibilities that will be part of "the new center." The left wing in that debate would be arguing for maximum employee participation, for experiments in public enterprise—for example in the field of energy. For more decentralization of business and government services.

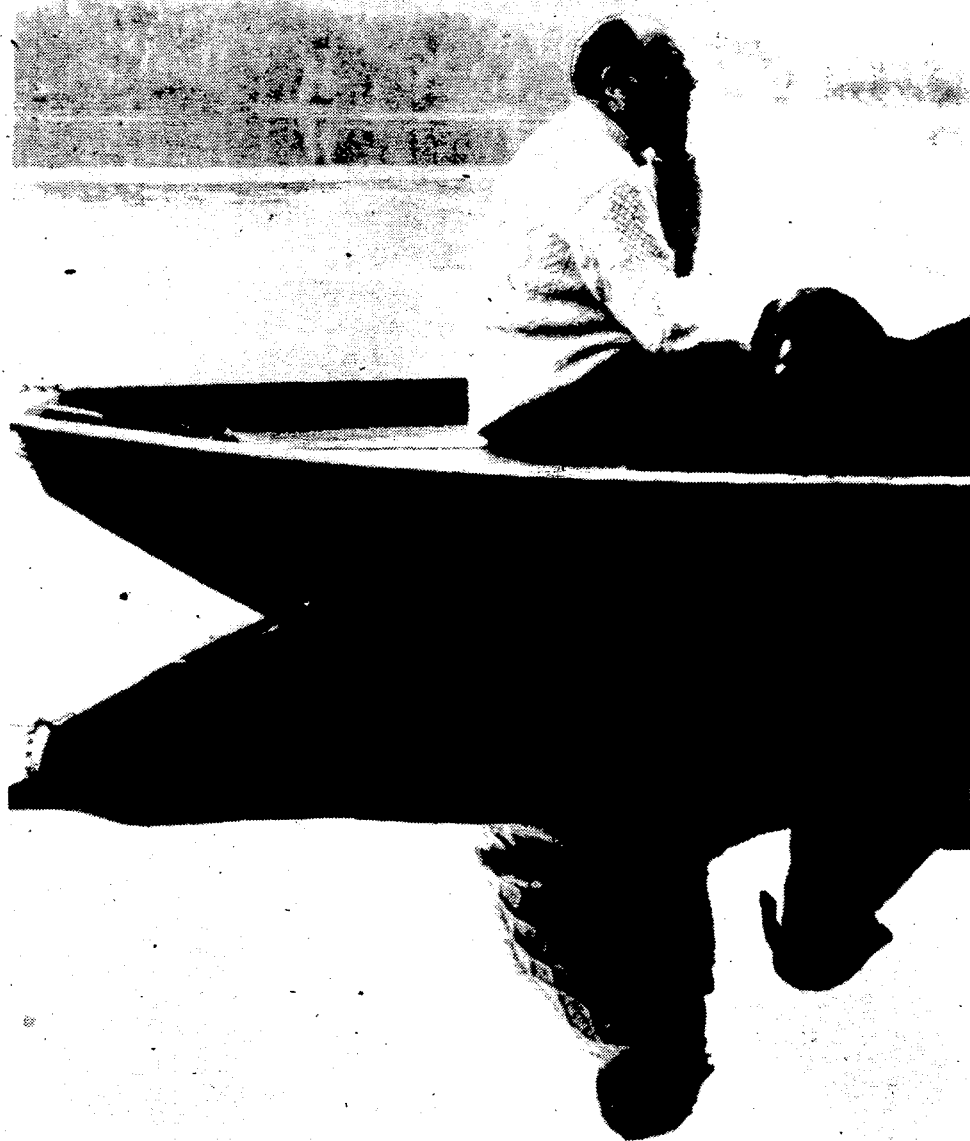
Is the new center the turf you're trying to stake out?

Well, no. I would say that CED is to the left of the spectrum. But we are also concerned about the absence of the center. In California the relationship CED has had with the Brown administration has been fruitful.

The Brown administration fills the center. They do things that we may strongly disagree with on occasion—on certain housing issues, on water issues and so forth. They also do a great many things that encourage us and come about

Continued on page 22

IN THE WORLD



Francois Mitterrand has begun his presidency by trying to revive France's best democratic spirit.

FRANCE

Mitterrand begins to melt the cynicism

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO, THE characteristic sound emitted by the species known as French leftist was a sort of unfunny dry laugh, which might be described as a cynical jeer. The species seemed permanently immune to a number of the world's illusions, such as tradition, ceremony, reverence for the dead, fine sentiments, romantic music, social democracy.

Thus it is all the more remarkable that on his inauguration day, Francois Mitterrand dared play out a solemn ritual combining all those targets for easy mockery in front of such an unpromising audience. He got away with it, in glory, only because his election is deeply felt by millions of people as an unexpected and perhaps undeserved liberation from a sort of creeping domestic restoration of the Nazi occupation. As the climax to his May 21 inauguration ceremonies, Mitterrand invented a ritual at the Pantheon that managed to express this feeling in symbolic terms.

The day began more conventionally. Mitterrand went to the Elysee Palace, where outgoing president Valery Giscard d'Estaing initiated him into the secrets of nuclear bomb button pushing. In an elegant little speech to a rather frosty group of notables assembled under the chandeliers, the new president then paid tribute to "those millions and millions of women and men, ferment of our people, who for two centuries, in peace and war, by their work and blood, have wrought the history of France without having access other than by brief and glorious fractures in our society."

He suggested that his election meant

that at long last the political majority would be durably identified with the social majority. "In the world of today, what higher exigency for our country than to achieve the new alliance of socialism and liberty, what finer ambition than to offer it to the world of tomorrow." The only winner of the May 10 elections was "hope," he declared, adding the wish that it might become "the most widely shared thing in France"—an allusion to Descartes' famous definition of reason.

At the end of his hand-shaking at the Elysee Palace, Mitterrand stopped to embrace elder statesman Pierre Mendes-France, telling him: "If I am here today, it is thanks to you." Mendes-France was too overcome with emotion to reply. Together, the two men had gone into opposition 23 years ago against the politely arranged coup d'etat that brought General de Gaulle—and with him, the French right—to power for what almost seemed like forever.

In fitful rain, Mitterrand was then driven up the Champs-Elysees for the usual wreath-laying at the tomb of the unknown soldier under the *Arc de Triomphe*. The ceremony was demilitarized and internationalized by the presence of foreign guests, Mitterrand's friends from the Socialist International—Willy Brandt, Olof Palme, Felipe Gonzalez *et al.*—and writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, James Baldwin, Arthur Miller. His guests also included the widows of Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda.

In the afternoon came the original part. Mitterrand invited the "people of Paris" to join him in the heart of the Latin Quarter, in front of the Pantheon, tomb of the republic's "great men," a monument that seemed to have fallen forever into forgetfulness, if not ridicule. As the Paris orchestra thundered out the "hymn to joy" from Beethoven's ninth symphony, Francois Mitterrand detached himself from the crowd and walked calmly and purposefully, alone with the television cameras, into the vast edifice, where he stopped three times, to meditate and place a red rose on each of three tombs. First Jean Moulin, martyr of the Resistance. Then Victor Schoelcher, crusader for racial equality who wrote the act abolishing black slavery in 1848. And finally Jean Jaures, French socialist leader assassinated on the eve of World War I. After this solitary—but splendidly televised—visit to the dead, the new president then returned to the living, apparently plunged in thought and unperturbed by the rain that drenched him as Beethoven reached the end of his multiple climaxes and gave way to a rarely-performed spirited arrangement of the *Marseillaise* by Berlioz.

Mitterrand thus symbolically restored the republic, gathered the illustrious dead on his side and gave back meaning to words, gestures and traditions that had seemed gone forever. The amazing thing about this rite, obvious as it was, is that it worked. People young and old who had seemed plunged forever into cynicism were suddenly blessed with a fresh naivete. Even the pelting rain, which dispersed the street dances planned throughout the Latin Quarter, failed to spoil the mood. For the first time since June 1968, riot

police vanished from the Latin Quarter, and the few gendarmes in fancy ceremonial tassels fraternized with the gentle crowd. The Latin Quarter was liberated by Mitterrand, who continues to live there himself, in the picturesque rue de Bievre, going to the Elysee "like to the office." He still has to pay off a large mortgage on the rue de Bievre home. This is public knowledge because Mitterrand, in a gesture unprecedented in France, disclosed both his financial situation (modest) and his medical check-up (fine, thank you).

The rich Giscard family bought their historic roots by purchasing a noble family name, d'Estaing, that had run out of heirs after boasting a bastard of Louis XIV. Mitterrand, from a family with more culture than money, seeks his legitimacy in shared traditions of popular ideals.

It's easy to dismiss this as demagoguery. But one of Mitterrand's first acts as President was to go against the vast majority of public opinion (according to all polls) by sparing a young convicted murderer from the guillotine. Public attitudes are still largely conditioned by fears instilled by the creeping police state of his predecessor. The liberation celebrated by the left has yet to be digested by the more timid and conventional half of the population.

Another test of principle is treatment of immigrant workers, politically voiceless and terrorized into silent indifference by the Giscard regime. One of the Socialist government's first measures was to suspend all expulsions. Children of immigrants, often jobless and threatened with expulsion to countries whose languages they can't speak, were assured that "their country is France." Simon Malley, editor of the anti-imperialist weekly *Afrique-Asie*, who was expelled from France several months ago despite massive protests from civil libertarians and African heads of state, is back in Paris. Young blacks will be able to take the metro with hope of making their appointments on time instead of being held up for endless, degrading "identity checks."

These little nothings explain the changed mood of the French left. Political alienation has its bitter comforts, of being always right and always helpless, which the French left has experienced fully in recent years and is ready to forego. The all-or-nothing mood has faded, because people have had their taste of nothing and are ready to settle for something, or the hope of something, the chance to work for something. The French left is rejoicing not because, with the election of Mitterrand, its political battles have been won, but because now they can begin.

CABINET

A new breed promises change

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

SINCE MITTERRAND WON, THERE is revived interest in every aspect of politics. His prime minister Pierre Mauroy's new cabinet was scrutinized eagerly by people who hadn't cared for years who was minister of what for clues to the landscape of a new phase of political combat.

Unlike the U.S., where non-partisan senior executives and strategists run the government whoever is elected, control over the powerful, centralized French state has changed hands completely, with 40 top posts filled by prominent Socialists. Underneath, of course, remain the career civil servants—many of whom have been lining up to join the P.S., some even offering to pay a couple of years back dues to give their official date



France's new Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy

of membership a less opportunistic look. But in the last days of the old regime, the moving vans and incinerators worked full time at the most sensitive ministries, where the newcomers found the cupboards bare of secrets.

The Ministry of Interior, main beehive of intrigue with responsibility for the police, was handed over to old-time Socialist mayor of Marseilles Gaston Defferre, 70, who was definitely not born yesterday and may be the only socialist tough and experienced enough to figure out who is up to what and actually take control. As Minister of State, Defferre is also in charge of the new function of "Decentralization," which should be a comfort to local notables.

Four other cabinet members have been given the top protocol rank of Minister of State, both to emphasize new priorities (the traditional top ministries of Defense, Justice, Finance and External Relations are correspondingly downgrad-

AFRICA

Overtures to the underdogs

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

A WEEK-LONG CONFERENCE on sanctions against South Africa held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, punctuated by Africa Day ceremonies May 25 celebrating the 18th birthday of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), provided a perfect occasion for the Socialist government to unveil its Africa policy before an appreciative audience.

Socialist Party (PS) first secretary Lionel Jospin opened the conference with a strong condemnation of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. Jospin reiterated PS policy calling on the French government to reduce imports from South Africa, end all public investment and stop aiding private investment there. He also called for an embargo on arms to South Africa, as well as support to the "front line" countries of southern Africa and to black liberation movement militants and refugees. As party leader with no official government role, Jospin could go much farther than the new External Relations Minister Claude Cheysson, who did not attend the sanctions meeting. This discretion was understood to be dictated by France's position within the "contact group" (along with the U.S., Britain, Canada and West Germany) supposed to wheedle Pretoria into a Namibian settlement in line with UN resolutions.

But Cheysson spoke at the African Day ceremonies, promising that from now on France would give diplomatic and political support to all those struggling for human dignity and democracy. He condemned racism and expressed gratitude to immigrant workers for their contribution to the French economy. These words made an impression because Africans already know and respect Cheysson. As European Commissioner, he helped negotiate the Lome accords regulating trade between Africa and the Common Market. He has an unusually thorough knowledge of African countries, problems and leaders. At the UNESCO meeting, Cheysson exchanged warm greetings with president Sam Nujoma of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO).

Envious diplomats from other Western countries privately made predictably sour comments about French exploitation of Socialist rhetoric. But Cheysson's credibility with Africans rests on more than words. They know he firmly believes that Europe's future depends on

ed, at least formally; and to flatter certain ambitions. A newly-created Ministry of National Solidarity covering all social welfare departments is entrusted to Nicole Questiaux, of the left CERES faction of the P.S. She sees her job as defense of rights people have won in historic struggles. The first decisions taken by the new government at its first cabinet meeting were to raise the minimum wage (probably by 10 percent) and substantially to increase (perhaps by 25 percent) family allocations, old age pensions and payments to handicapped people. Measures will also be taken to lower optional retirement age to 60 and create structures to assure that young people between the ages of 16 and 21 are not left unemployed.

Next comes Michel Jobert, 60, eccentric left-wing Gaullist and former foreign minister, named Minister of Foreign Trade to reassure business circles and above all the Arabs, with whom he has excellent relations, and who could wreck French finances if they suddenly withdrew their billions in investment capital from France.

The other two Ministers of State are the two young rival heirs to the socialist throne, Michel Rocard, 50, who wanted to run for president instead of Mitter-

establishing new kinds of relations with Africa.

The new approach was announced by downgrading the formerly powerful, free-wheeling Cooperation Ministry—in practice the ministry of African colonies—and putting it under supervision of the Quai d'Orsay. The new delegate minister in charge of cooperation, Jean-Pierre Cot, 42, is perhaps the French Socialist with the most friends in Washington. Maybe part of his job will be to convince the Americans that Paris' new policy is the best way to counter Soviet in-

tradition with the more generous positions taken by the Socialist International headed by Willy Brandt.

The comparison is appropriate, but there are solid reasons to expect that the system will work differently in its French version. For one thing, France is a leading power in Africa, with means to carry out an independent policy, which Bonn lacks. For another, the French socialists, for all their differences, share ideas about economic policy that are still rare in the German Social Democratic Party. The state has far more control of such mat-



Socialist Party first secretary Lionel Jospin, in one of his first official acts, has asserted his party's support for Black Africa.

fluence in Africa.

French diplomacy from now on can benefit from the flexibility of having two foreign policies towards the Third World: the militantly progressive policy of the Socialist International expressed by Jospin, and the more cautious official government policy of Cheysson. Connoisseurs of social democratic treachery will spot the precedent: West Germany, where the conservative foreign policy of the Bonn government headed by Helmut Schmidt has been in constant con-

rand, and Jean-Pierre Chevenement, 42, leader of CERES (Center for Socialist Study, Research and Education). Rocard is in charge of Planning and Territorial Development—a slightly ironic assignment for the man who defended "the market" against the planned economy in Party debates. He would no doubt have preferred the Ministry of Economics and Finance, which went to technocrat banker Jacques Delors. Mitterrand seems to be inviting Rocard to cool his heels and look to the future.

Chevenement was given the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technology, and immediately bounced in with plans to raise research spending from 1.8 percent to 2.5 percent of GNP by 1985 and make France one of the most advanced countries in the world.

Certainly no segment of the population is happier with the Socialist victory than researchers and academics. The Ministry of Universities, which under Giscard's hatchet woman, the dread Alice Saunier-Seite, was slashing away at the universities and moving rapidly to extend private business' control over education, has simply been abolished. The universities are back under the Ministry of National Education, and the Mitterrand era promises to restore the humanities, not-

ters in France than in West Germany. If Jospin runs ahead expressing guiding principles, Cheysson is likely to follow up by moving more gradually in the same direction.

With its advanced positions, the PS will be in a good position to undertake unofficial missions to trouble spots, sounding out local leaders and paving the way for official diplomacy to negotiate solutions. In particular, Colonel Kadhafi's friendly reaction to the Socialist victory suggests a mutually satisfac-

ably history and philosophy, to their traditional prominence in an education designed to awaken critical thinking.

A new Ministry of the Sea has been created and appropriately given to a Breton, Louis Le Penec, who immediately got to make the home folks happy by announcing a cancellation of the nuclear power plant at Plogoff.

The main target of sarcastic comments is another novelty, the new Ministry of Free Time, given to teachers' union leader Andre Henry. Whether through unemployment or the 35-hour week, Free Time promises to have a large constituency in the 1980s.

Giscard's Ministry of the Feminine Condition has been replaced by the Ministry of Women's Rights, headed by Yvette Roudy, who has studied the problem thoroughly at the European Parliament and is all set to introduce measures that will bring French practice into line with the principles endorsed by the European Economic Community.

Edith Cresson, a member of the P.S. leadership, is the first woman Minister of Agriculture. She is an agronomist.

In a clear departure from the frequent semi-fascist macho image of sports ministries, a woman, 36-year-old Parisian member of parliament Edwige Avice, was nam-

tory solution may be worked out to the Chad imbroglio.

The PS has issued a paper spelling out its position on several controversies in sub-Saharan Africa. It supports the Polisario in the Western Sahara. It also supports the Eritrean people's right to self-determination, but favors a solution guaranteeing Ethiopia's access to the sea, and expresses sympathetic interest in Ethiopia's revolution. Regarding the Indian Ocean, the PS declares that "any attempt to integrate the South African naval base at Simonstown into the Western military camp would be a very grave threat to peace in that area."

In general, the PS blames the government of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing for creating crisis by its "contempt for the right of people to decide for themselves" and then rushing in with military intervention to solve problems of its own making. The French Socialists are alarmed at the Reagan administration's evident desire to gang up with South Africa against Angola.

The PS considers the USSR just as self-serving as other great powers, but grants that its policy in Africa has so far been law-abiding, and attributes its interventions to "gross blunders or cowardice on the part of the Western powers." PS secretary for international affairs Veronique Neiertz hopes to give Africans an opportunity to "escape from the logic of Yalta, that is from alignment with one or the other of the two blocs."

To this end, Neiertz would very much like to see Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe join the Socialist International. On the other hand, French and other European socialist parties take a dim view of the "Socialist Inter-African" association recently founded by Senegalese ex-president Leopold Sedar Senghor and Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba, apparently in an attempt to create their own African version of the Socialist International. The countries and parties showing interest were much too conservative to suit the SI.

African students in Paris are seeing their futures brighten. Whereas Giscard tended to back the most corrupt African leaders, the Socialists are expected to throw their weight behind enlightened and democratic elites. Africans are not particularly afraid of the Russians and appreciate their support of liberation movements, but experience has shown that the USSR has little else to offer.

There are 165 French companies doing highly profitable business in South Africa, with investments of some eight billion francs. The conflict between those interests and socialist principles is obviously not going to be resolved all at once or all in favor of principle. The most immediate result of the policy change is that France will refuse to provide enriched uranium for South Africa's first nuclear power plant in Koeberg, which could hold up its operation for several years until the South Africans perfect their own enriching process.

ed Minister Delegate for youth and sports.

Several ministries in the social field, notably Labor, Health and Housing, have been assigned to lesser lights of the Socialist Party who may be merely keeping the chairs warm for Communists to be brought into the government after the two-round legislative elections June 14 and 21. Only the most fanatic anti-communist could be upset by, say, a woman communist minister of health, or a communist minister of labor to keep the workers quiet.

But Communist entrance into the government depends on this month's elections and meeting certain conditions. Socialist leader Lionel Jospin has insisted that the PCF must revise its position on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, if it hopes to sit in the cabinet. This means a hearty helping of crow for Georges Marchais, who roundly insulted Socialist Pierre Joxe at a Moscow press conference last year, calling Joxe an "insolent twerp" for asking the PCF to clarify its position on Afghanistan. Ironically, Joxe, 45, is one of the P.S.'s few out-and-out Marxists and a leading defender of left unity between the P.S. and the PCF. Even more ironically, Joxe now occupies the cabinet post, Minister of Industry, that Marchais has always wanted. ■

Melvyn

By Pat Aufderheide

When Oscar-winner Melvyn Douglas was trying to make a movie out of Tillie Olsen's story, he knew it was a gamble. But that's what he wants, even if the movie

MELVYN DOUGLAS is a veteran of 70 films as well as two careers in the theater and appearances on television. He is also a veteran of battles of political expression in Hollywood. During his early career on the Broadway stage he played opposite actress Helen Gahagan, who married him during the course of a play. They went to Hollywood in 1931, where in eight years and 36 films Douglas played opposite all the leading ladies of the time as escort, husband, lover or friend. Helen Gahagan Douglas meanwhile left acting to become a Democratic Party activist and member of Congress from 1944-50, until she ran for the U.S. Senate against Richard Nixon, who destroyed her career by conducting a Red smear campaign.

Douglas became one of the most prominent people in the anti-fascist Popular Front in Hollywood. With Philip Dunne he was the unofficial leader of the then-liberal majority of the Motion Picture Democratic Committee. The MPDC supported unionization in Hollywood and monitored state and local electoral politics. In 1938, the MPDC worked to elect the idiosyncratic New Dealer Culbert Olson.

Douglas was outraged in 1939 when Communist members of the anti-Nazi League and the MPDC supported the Hitler-Stalin Pact. He resigned from both organizations. While Douglas attempted to remove Communist members from other liberal organizations in Hollywood, at the same time conservatives were busy Red-baiting him, and he appeared by the Dies Committee and was considered for, but eventually exempted from appearing before, HUAC.

After Douglas' stint in the Army and a short time in Hollywood, he returned to the stage. He returned to movies in the '60s as a character actor. He won two Oscars for supporting roles—*Hud* in 1963 and *Being There* in 1979.

Two weeks ago in New York, Douglas talked about his latest role and his work as an actor.

Why did you decide to take the role in *TELL ME A RIDDLE*?

It interested me that these young women who had not done anything before were adventurous enough to strike out on their own. It seemed to me an act, if not of bravery, then at least of bravado. The material I didn't know much about initially. I had vaguely heard about Tillie Olsen. But the more I came to know about it the more interested I became.

But then I was worried about my capacity to do it. For several years now I've been wary about what I do—arthritis, angina, diabetes, a couple of other things. So I told Susan O'Connell [one of the three co-producers] to have lunch with me and see how I walk. She came out, we had a very pleasant time, and she talked to her colleagues. They promised me I wouldn't overreach myself. That's all very well to say, but as it wound up I did overreach myself—I worked almost three weeks with pneumonia without realizing it.



Melvyn Douglas creates an authentic character.

Did you pay special attention to the project because it was independent?

If anyone comes along with anything interesting and noncommercial I give it consideration. But recently some filmmakers sent me a script that involved an old man and a little boy. Well, it may not be under commercial auspices, but it's as commercial as anything you can find. Every trick in the book was in it. If I'm going to do that kind of thing I might as well go out and get all the dough I can for it.

How do you think *TELL ME A RIDDLE* worked out?

I don't think the film succeeded in being Tillie Olsen's story. Her story was really much more harsh, and in a curious way less political. It was not really a political story at all, except that in her memory the woman had been a revolutionary character. She had been silenced because of her life—that comes out more in another of Olsen's works, *Silences*.

The business of her wanting to pass her political tradition on to her granddaughter was all introduced and I honestly didn't like it very much. She becomes a very different character. I have a notion that Olsen herself was not too happy with the way it turned out. That, of course, is not unusual with authors.

The film shows us people we don't usually meet on the screen, though.

That was one of the things that interested me immensely. Here, at least, were authentic people. Even as we did the film they remained that, thank God. That's very

unusual, to find a film these days that anyone from Hollywood has anything to do with, that remains in that sense honest.

Is it more rare than it used to be?

Well, in order to get money it has to go through so many of the same old hands—or the same type of hands—the money grubbers who are out to put the stamp on it that they think is the stamp of success.

The same motivations are there as in the '30s, with rare exceptions. The motifs may be different. There may be more exploitation of sex, although I doubt it. Then it was done through a veil, and today the veil is torn asunder. The Andy Hardy pictures were as exploitative of sex as anything that ever came down the turnpike.

BEING THERE was a commercial film, yet also a film with substance.

That was an interesting film and an interesting part. They come along seldom.

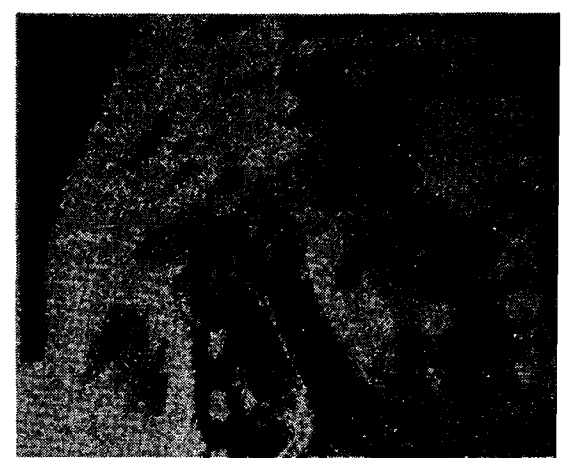
That happened largely because of one man's determination. Peter Sellers had read Kozinski's book and was enchanted by it. He identified himself with that character more than with any he ever played before. He kept after Kozinski for a couple of years to sell it to him, and finally persuaded him. It was not a picture company that made it happen, and I think you will find that's true with many of the more interesting productions. There may be more of that nowadays than there used to be, because the studios are different now.

You worked in the old studio system.

Oh yes, in a real factory. I worked for MGM. I can remember, the executive offices had several resplendent floors, and one of them was the writers' floor, given

over to these whitewashed cubicles. One fellow who was known for his wit got in the elevator and instead of asking for the writers' floor got in and said, "Surgery, please."

You basically only played one type of character?



Solving the ric

TELL ME A RIDDLE WAS A FILM I knew I ought to like. The film, directed and produced by women, has as its focus a woman struggling to grasp her sense of self. Made from the Tillie Olsen short story, it is about old people, left tradition, the work of dying. As an independent feature that competes with studio-promoted products, it departs from feature formula without losing accessibility.

I knew I should like this film, but I lik-

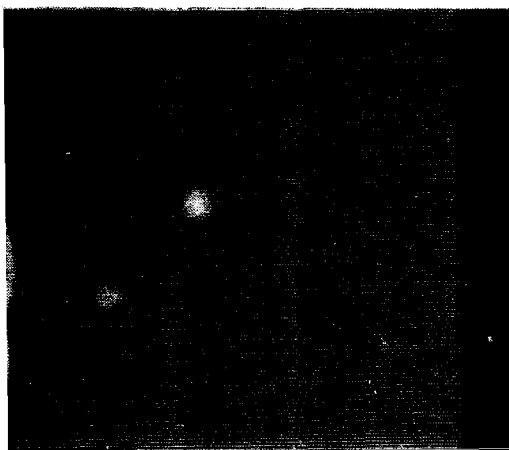
nd Tillie

is said "yes" to three warring unknowns
Olsen's *Tell Me a Riddle*,
he's used to that. He has a history of doing
nobody don't like it.



Well, that was the chief reason I wanted to get away from it. I got to feeling I was doing the same thing over and over again.

the Kedrova plays the long-
strained wife.



one

ed it anyway.

Its story is told in the third person, which changes the content as well as the emotional tone of the subjectively-structured short story. A grandmother (Lila Kedrova), a Russian immigrant married almost five decades to a taciturn wall-paper hanger (Melvyn Douglas) becomes increasingly withdrawn, battling both the pressure of her worn-out husband to sell their old house (her only space) and her creeping cancer. When the kids find out about her illness she begins a farewell

I had had a good many years in the theater before that, working in a stock company, which was very different then.

You went into a town with perhaps 20 players, who stayed a season, you changed the play every week. You became part of the town itself, as much as the local doctor. Sometimes you went back to the same place year after year. I was in Madison, Wisconsin for three years in a row. And you did every kind of thing. I played everything from 17-year-old messenger boys to 80-year-old grandfathers. I think they were the most interesting years I had in the theater.

It must have required an entirely different kind of discipline to play those cardboard roles.

A great many people liked it. You got yourself a cushy job, if you did well and you didn't get embroiled in the local political scene or anything else.

Did anyone ever call you on the carpet for your political involvement?

It was never as crass as that, but I did have a couple of confrontations with L.B. Mayer in which he more than hinted that everyone would be happier if I would desist. Most people did not voice a political opinion.

The creative community had been pretty apathetic, until after Roosevelt's election Mayer tried to institute a policy whereby his employees were commanded to contribute to the election of Republicans.

But what started it for me was what was going on in Europe. My father was Jewish, and I had not known I had any Jewish blood until I was in my 20s. I took a trip to Palestine in which my emotional involvement deepened so that by the time the Nazi thing began to grow I reacted with great shock.

So when we made a trip to Europe in the late '30s we told everyone when we

tour of their homes. Eventually she settles, exhausted, in San Francisco with her freewheeling loft-living nurse granddaughter Jeannie (Brooke Adams). The growing relationship between them makes it possible for the old couple to forgive each other and love each other again after all the bitter years.

Family life here is something other than a made-for-TV artifact. The filmmakers communicate the oppressive qualities of family relations. A looming lens assaults us with the strained false cheer of a hospital visitor, with the annoying compassion of guests at a dinner gone awry. Flashbacks show shockingly the resentful passivity of a new mother who can't bring herself to hold her baby, and the urging of a bedding-down husband to his bookish wife, "Don't read now, don't read."

Kedrova's performance communicates a suffocating sense of being cut off from the ordinary joy of daily life (although it's hard to see her querulous character as the same spunky revolutionary of her childhood). Douglas, the most vivid and believable character in the film, shares with the audience a baffled impatience with her magical distance. By the end, a complicated thickness, the undeniable of long-lived relationships, has been established.

It becomes a story—finally—about success in marital love and in com-



Steve Smith

came back to the U.S. what we had seen and heard in Germany and France. This got me involved in the Anti-Nazi League, and led little by little to political involvement, in the Popular Front days. But that broke up when the war came along. The warriors on the extreme left deserted the flag. When the Soviet Union was attacked, of course, they came around, but by then the club was broken up.

How did you leave the old studio system?

I walked out of Hollywood during the war into the Army and walked out of my whole theatrical career. When I came back I thought I was through with my contract, but to my horror I discovered I had signed a paper allowing them to tack on the three-and-a-half years I had been in the Army. A lawyer got me out under the California Peonage Act, which was written to protect Mexican wetbacks who couldn't read or write. Saved me three years or so.

Then I was very lucky. I was able to continue to work in pictures with better money than I had been getting under contract. And then I went back to the theater.

In the theater did you continue to have the political voice you had in Hollywood?

It was after the war, and the atmosphere

munication between generations. The private despair of the short story is gone, and so is the excoriating sense of the horror in one woman's silence. In its place is sentimental (but not banal) hope.

Tell Me a Riddle is a much less important film than the story is among short stories; but it's a much better film than most of the fare available in movie houses.

The film united people from different generations of social activism—Melvyn Douglas; director Lee Grant (director of *Willmar Eight*); and the three young women who co-produced the film as Godmother Productions.

"I learned an incredible amount from earlier generations of activists," said co-producer Rachel Lyon, a young film production veteran who met her co-producers at school, where they heard Tillie Olsen read *Tell Me a Riddle* and couldn't forget it. "I learned what the '60s had come out of, and now I am much more interested in the long haul."

The film was made against most of the usual odds, with some peculiar breaks and knocks. It wasn't easy to make a film dealing with old people—the insurance companies ate up \$80,000 of a \$1.75 million budget (put together from private investors, four of whom donated the bulk of the money). The company weathered a dispute with the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET), which filed a complaint with

Left to right, co-producers
Susan O'Connor, Rachel Grant,
and Mindy Aftine.

was totally different. The blacklisting thing had come out and people knew what was going on, although even then there were still traces of it. I went on tour with *Inherit the Wind*, and we had a couple of actors who had been blacklisted. The American Legion threatened to picket the theater. Only as a result of threats to our company manager, who threatened to sue them for restraint of trade, did they call off the dogs.

What made it possible for you to be independent of the conformist pressures in the film industry?

It was just the way I felt about it. From the time I signed the MGM contract I was so uncomfortable feeling that somebody had control over my life, usually people for whom I didn't have much respect.

To lose control of my life was a horror to me. No matter what, I got out of it.

And the security, the money?

The other thing just didn't seem important enough to give up anything for. ■

the Department of Labor when the company hired production workers at less than scale.

But Godmother Productions also had breaks, not the least of which was the enthusiasm for the project shown by Lee Grant and Douglas. The San Francisco-based filmmakers also received support—names, phone numbers, advice—from Francis Coppola, whose Zoetrope studio is located in San Francisco.

Tell Me a Riddle appeared when independents are more visible than they have been for many years, in part because of organizations like the Independent Feature Project—which promotes an annual showing of such films to national and international buyers; First Run Features—which organizes theatrical distribution; and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers—which lobbies for independent filmmakers. For the Godmothers it meant escape from West Coast isolation.

"It's great for me to be able to call New York, to get communication going and to share information," said Lyon. "I think independents will become more important because the film industry can't produce enough product for new markets in cable, disc and overseas. And accountants, agents and lawyers are in the top positions in film studios—they know money, but they don't know filmmaking. ■

EDITORIAL

Local control starts with rent control

On June 3 the Senate voted to approve a housing program that would increase the autonomy of local governments in administering federal grants, but at the same time adopted an amendment to cut off public rental housing funds to cities that adopt rent control. (The House Banking Committee rejected the amendment on June 9.) This apparent contradiction in the conservative ideology about local control now prevalent in Washington once again reveals that the administration is not really interested in bringing political power closer to the American people, but is determined to subordinate the public welfare to corporate interests, in housing as in everything else.

In fact, the rent control movement is locally based and a consequence of the inability of private capital to provide adequate shelter for millions of Americans. The price of new housing has skyrocketed. In 1965 the average price of a new single-family house was \$20,000. By May 1979 the price of a new house had tripled to \$62,900. It now averages \$84,000. This increase has far outpaced the growth of the average American's income. The cost of owning a home has jumped from 26 percent of median family income in 1970 to more than 40 percent today. With that increase, the American dream of owning one's own home has been all but shattered.

With the option of owning their own homes being foreclosed, more Americans are settling into the rental market. But fewer rental units are being built. According to a 1980 report by the Comptroller General of the General Accounting Office—"Rental Housing: A National Problem that Needs Immediate Attention"—the average annual number of rental units constructed dropped by 52 percent from 1970-73 to 1975-78. The reduction has been even sharper for low-income housing. With the slowdown in rental construction, the vacancy rate has also been on the decline. In April 1979 it dropped to 4.8 percent, the lowest vacancy rate recorded since 1956, when the Bureau of the Census began collecting such information.

Fewer rental units means higher rents, and, indeed, the Comptroller General reports that from 1973 to '77, while renter income increased by 5.6 percent annually, rents increased at an average annual rate of 9.6 percent. As a result, the portion of the population having to pay more for rent than 25 percent of household income—HUD's recommended maximum—grew from 41 to 49 percent during that period.

Competition for rentals has, of course, been especially hard on the poor. According to a 1980 HUD study, 5.3 million lower-income households live in "physically inadequate housing." Of all tenants paying more than 35 percent of their income for rent in 1977, 86 percent had annual earnings of less than \$7,000.

Ronald Reagan and his conservative supporters claim that our country's problems are the result of excessive government interference in the economy. Government intervention has contributed to the current housing crisis. But the problem has to do with the nature of government intervention, not the amount. Pro-corporate government policies have repeatedly produced what Paul Starr and Gosta Esping Andersen call "passive intervention." This is a policy that attempts to address social problems without challenging the corporate interests that cause them. Passive intervention forestalls imminent crises, but it creates more serious ones in the future. The history of housing policy in the U.S. has been a history of passive intervention.

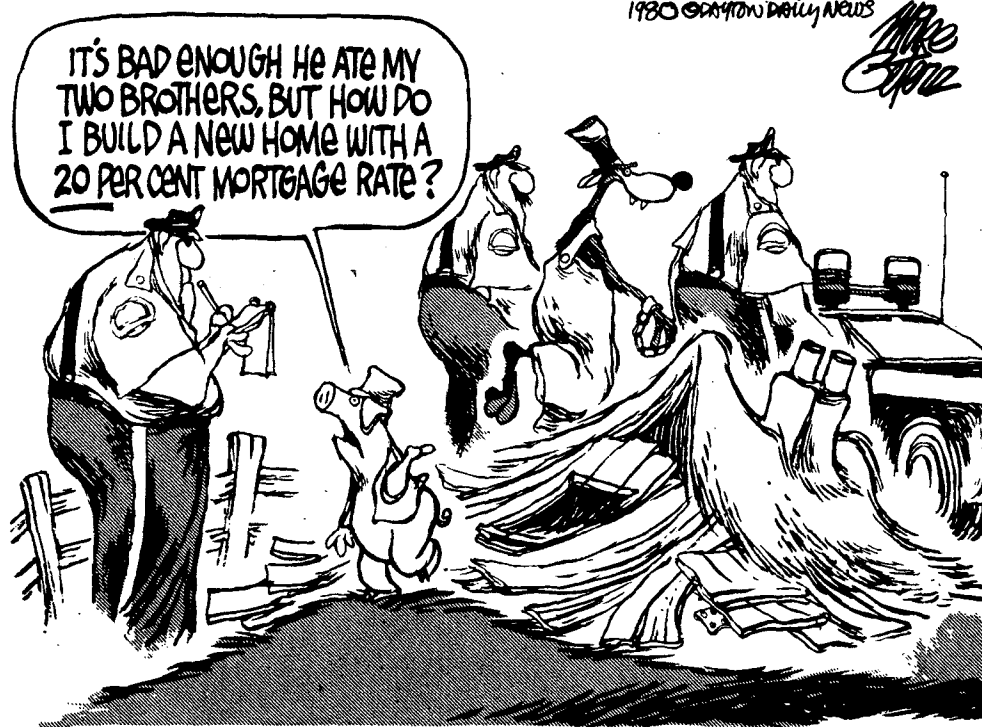
The current housing crisis has its roots in the severe housing shortage that followed World War II. At that time, federal officials considered providing publicly built housing. Financial interests in conjunction with the building industry vetoed this policy and encouraged the government to stimulate the private market through favorable tax policies and loan guarantees for one-family suburban homes. Aside from the sprawling slums in the inner cities—these could be ignored as long as riots could be avoided—this policy proved relatively effective until the mid-'70s.

In these days of stagflation, federal tax laws—especially deductions for interest on mortgages and low capital gains taxes on profits made from the sale of houses—have made buying a house an attractive hedge against inflation. Stimulation by the federal government has kept demand up despite rising prices and even though growing numbers of middle-income families have been priced out of the market. But the real money has been made in luxury homes. Capital for con-

providing habitable residences. As soaring rents increasingly pinched tenants' pocketbooks, rent control came to the fore as the cutting edge of the tenants movement in the '70s. According to sociologist Peter Dreier, rent control has been enacted in some 200 cities across the country in recent years, and many others are considering the issue.

The movement for rent control has spurred counter-organization by the construction and real estate industries. The National Multi-Housing Council (NMHC), supported by the National As-

Local control sounds good, but for Reagan block grants are a sometime thing.



struction of lower priced homes has been reduced as people have been withdrawing money from savings institutions in order to earn more interest elsewhere.

Federal tax policies also have contributed to rising rents and shortages of rental housing. Provisions for accelerated depreciation promoted rapid turnover of properties, which, coupled with rising interest rates, drive up rents. The attractiveness of frequent selling has meant that about one-half of all real estate investment has gone to finance the purchase or refinancing of existing buildings rather than to new construction. The tax advantages conferred upon homeowners by the federal tax code also stimulated the demand for condominiums. Condo conversions have absorbed many of the housing units that otherwise would have been available as rentals.

The growth of the tenants movement.

The tenants movement is a grassroots response to the private market's failure to provide adequate housing to the American public. It was no coincidence that the impetus to form a nationwide tenants association came from Harlem when spiraling rents from 1963 to 1965 led to the formation of the National Tenants Organization. The war on poverty programs brought lawyers and organizers to the tenants movement, which was instrumental in passing laws giving protection against evictions of tenant activists and

sociation of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders, has taken the lead in a nationwide campaign against rent control. Its spokesperson told *In These Times* that rent control is an "artificial intrusion on the marketplace that has discouraged the construction of rental housing." Richard Fore, former NMHC president, served on the Reagan transition team's advisory committee on urban affairs and was an important force in the committee's recommendation to Congress to withhold federal subsidies from cities with rent control.

Arguments such as the NMHC's have gained widespread circulation, but they don't square with the facts. Contrary to the assertion that rent control discourages construction of multi-family housing, considerable evidence indicates that rent control does not cause any decline in multi-family housing construction. A 1974 study of rent control in Massachusetts, by Urban Planning Aid, found that from 1971 to 1973, 54 percent more multi-family units were built in rent controlled communities than in the three previous years. In non-rent controlled communities, only 39 percent more units were built. A study of New Jersey by John Gilderbloom revealed that while construction of multi-family housing fell by 82 percent in 37 cities without rent control from 1975-77 compared to 1970-72, it declined by only 26 percent in 26 cities with rent control. Gilderbloom concluded that builders chose to continue in

areas they were familiar with because newly constructed housing is usually not controlled. Even after considering that newly constructed units might eventually come under rent control provisions, Gilderbloom found, builders continued to build in rent controlled areas because most rent control laws guarantee a reasonable return on investment.

The real estate lobby argues that rent control discourages maintenance of housing. But Joseph Eckert's study of rent control in Brookline, Mass., found that the average percentage of the rent dollar going to maintenance and repair actually increased from 4.2 percent in 1970 to 5.0 percent in 1974. After surveying other studies he concluded that there was no evidence that rent control affected spending on maintenance.

Opponents of rent control love to juxtapose images of abandoned tenements in the South Bronx with assertions that rent control is at the root of the abandonment problem. But economist Peter Marcuse's study of rental housing in New York found that abandonment was no greater among rent controlled units than among decontrolled ones. He concluded that abandonment was a function of a building's age and the general neighborhood deterioration, rather than of rent control. A National Urban League study ranking New York fifth in rate of abandonment—after four non-rent controlled cities—lends support to his conclusion.

The real estate and building industry lobby makes rent control a scapegoat for the current housing crisis by contending that it prevents the private housing market from functioning normally to resolve the problems. But rent control is needed precisely because the private market has created the housing crisis and cannot resolve it. Because of its reluctance to interfere with vested market interests, the government's efforts to deal with the housing problem have in the long run only made things worse.

Housing is too vital a necessity to be left to the private market. Rent control is a way to assert a measure of control over the market, but it is effective only with widespread tenant participation. Even then, while controls might end exorbitant rent increases, promote better maintenance and protect tenants from unfair evictions, they are only a first step toward a solution to this country's housing problems. But rent control is a promising step because it focuses attention on the failures of the market and provides a forum for raising the question of social investment. But in the long run, it will help resolve the housing problem only if it fosters an awareness among tenants that they can utilize the political process to assert control over the use of capital for their own benefit and the benefit of society in general.

An informative volume on these matters is hot off the press. Rent Control: A Source Book edited by John Gilderbloom contains articles by many prominent housing scholars and activists. It includes discussion of the dimensions of the current housing crisis, how to write a rent control law, how to win a rent control campaign and the relationship of rent control to political strategies for the left. The book is available only through mail order at the Foundation for National Progress, Housing Information Center, P.O. Box 3396, Santa Barbara CA 93105.

A National Tenants Union Conference will be held on July 12 at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. For further information call (202) 737-3703.

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

THE IMPOTENCE OF BEING ERNEST

WE APPRECIATED YOUR EXCELLENT coverage of the first day of Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the nomination of Ernest Lefever to head the State Department's Human Rights Office, "The Discomfort of Being Ernest" (*ITT*, May 27).

However, senators don't act in a vacuum. Your article didn't discuss the impact of a nationwide progressive campaign against the nomination. A broad coalition of religious and human rights groups in the home states of undecided senators on the committee—Mathias, Kassebaum, Boschwitz, Zorinsky—affected their decision to oppose Lefever.

Clergy and Laity Concerned focused on the key role of chairman Charles Percy, urging him to broaden the hearings to include witnesses from grassroots groups. The group delivered to the committee petitions signed by over 1,000 clergy and lay religious leaders from Percy's home state of Illinois.

The effort was so effective that Lefever publicly named CALC and other groups opposing his nomination as circulating "scandal sheets." The truth, of course, was that his nomination was a scandal.

The defeat of Lefever shows that regardless of the supposed New Right ascendancy, grassroots efforts focusing on critical issues can make significant gains in United States foreign policy—even in the U.S. Senate. That was the importance of beating Ernest.

—Norman Watkins and Ron Freund
Clergy and Laity Concerned, Chicago

IRA IRE

THOMAS RICE'S PRO-IRA PERSPECTIVES piece (*ITT*, May 27) was so filled with inaccuracies and irrelevancies that I would like to correct some of them. (1) He says Scottish Protestant—there were plenty of English too—settlers replaced Irish peasants and "enjoyed a sharecropping arrangement comparable to the American South." (a) Ulster and Scotland are 11 miles at the closest. People have been moving back and forth across that water as long as people have been living in those islands. The Scots were Ulster Gaels. They invaded the land of the Picts (among others) and so dominated it that the world has been calling it Scotland for 1,000 years. So, if one wants to play the aborigine game, one can say that those 17th-century Scottish settlers were merely returning home. Ulster Scots who remained Catholic, notably those in the Glens of Antrim, became Irish nationalists, while "native" Irish Gaels who converted were fully accepted in the Protestant people. There are Orangemen named Murphy, Kelly and Kane. Racist analysis or analogy just doesn't go very far in Ulster. (b) The mass of the Protestant "planters" did not exploit Catholic peasants in a landlord/sharecropper relationship, they too were tenants. If Rice didn't intend to conjure up images of Southern race patterns with this inaccurate history, I can't imagine why he put it in there.

(2) Partition, amazing as it must seem now, was not the question that provoked the civil war (1922-23) within the Irish nationalist armed forces. Both factions assumed partition was a temporary measure. (3) Rice seems to confuse De Valera, the leader of the "no com-

promise" Republicans, with the compromisers who formed the government of the Irish Free State in 1922 depriving De Valera of his presidency. (4) Why does he quote seven lines from the (rightly notorious) Special Powers Act, and speak of it in the present tense? It was superseded in 1973. (5) The "KGB/Kamakazi" B Specials were disbanded 10 years ago. They were an ill-disciplined group, the source of much bitter resentment from Catholics. They were more like sheriff's deputies than a "commando group," and were not known to have dive-bombed Catholic ghettos.

(6) It seems unlikely that London could have instituted special category status "in 1973" (I think it was 1972 anyway) to accommodate Carter who didn't become president until 1977. (7) The "dirty protesters," so Rice would have us believe, smeared their "excrement on the...walls so as to keep it off their bedding and floor." If that makes sense to you, you'll believe anything. (8) Rice follows his version of the H-Blocks with the implication (once again, not stated explicitly) that Amnesty and the NCCL documented torture there. Not so. In 1977 they did expose a pattern of abuses and beatings in the Castlereagh Interrogation Centre. The government's Bennett Commission (1979) then confirmed this and proposed measures to protect detainees' rights. Closed circuit TV at interrogations is a notable part of the new system.

(9) Rice quotes a 1979 poll from Southern Ireland showing strong IRA support. Well, in September 1980, Carrick James Market Research conducted, and Radio Telefis Eireann (the Dublin state monopoly) published, a survey of Northern Ireland which found that, among Northern Catholics alone, 3 percent identified with the IRA, 11 percent didn't answer, 7 percent identified with those Republicans (called Sinn Féin, the Workers' Party) who have renounced the appropriateness of the national "liberation" struggle. 23 percent of the Catholics (76 percent of the Protestants, 58 percent overall) even opposed Dublin intervention in Northern discussions for its own self-government. 58 percent of Catholics (but 28 percent overall) favored Dublin intervention. (13 percent overall declined to comment.)

—Robert St-Cyr
Greenlawn, N.Y.

KNOWS IT WELL

BOTH OF THE ARTICLES ON Northern Ireland (*ITT*, May 27) are excellent. I especially like the very cogent piece written by Thomas J. Rice, "Only a British Exit Can Stop the IRA." It is well informed, quite accurate. I hope that you carry more pieces from him as the situation over there develops.

Rice knows the situation as well as anyone writing about it in this country.

—Alfred McClung Lee
Professor Emeritus, CUNY

IT'S EVEN WORSE

STEVE MAX'S ARTICLE "HOW TO MAKE Billions for Arms Look Smaller" (*ITT*, May 27) still doesn't give us the true cost of the war budget. He left out the defense-related portion of the Department of Energy budget. The Reagan administration-proposed FY 1982 DOE budget has \$5 billion allotted for defense activity, mostly for production

of new nuclear war heads.

In addition, the DOE budget also contains another \$3.88 billion for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which the military surely would confiscate should it ever be called into use, or a real national emergency arose.

So Max needs to add another \$8.8 billion to his revised \$261.7 billion total. That brings the total up to \$270.5 billion. Nearly 57 cents of the Reagan budget dollar will be for past, present and future wars.

Incidentally, it may interest *ITT* readers to know that defense related activities of DOE exceed its Energy Development activities.

—Dick Greenwood
Washington, D.C.

MISERABLE

THOMAS J. RICE'S PERSPECTIVES Column (*ITT*, May 27), which argued for a British exit from Northern Ireland and defended the Irish Republican Army, contains more factual errors than anything I've read on Northern Ireland since the early '70s. Rice tries to legitimate the IRA by putting the conflict into an historical context. His attempt is a miserable failure.

I'll just mention a few of the most obvious errors. Rice has Ireland's population decreasing from eight to two million in just 18 months, following the beginning of the Irish Famine in 1845. Actually, Ireland's population went from 8,175,000 in 1841 to 6,552,000 in 1851, with the decrease coming about equally from emigration and mortality due to hunger and disease.

Another gross error is easily seen in Rice's references to the Irish Civil War of 1921. He has Eamon De Valera leading those favoring the Treaty which ended the 1916-1920 war with Britain and established the Irish Free State in the 26 counties of southern Ireland, driving the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) underground. This is all backwards. De Valera was the leader of the anti-Treaty Republicans, and it was Michael Collins, the president of the Supreme Council of the IRB, who led the pro-Treaty government.

—Jeff Tarbox
Wiscasset, Me.

DIANA, SI—REAGAN, NO

I AM PROUD OF DIANA JOHNSTONE. She taught French at the University of Minnesota. On April 18, 1970, she spoke at the climax of an anti-war march in Loring Park, Minneapolis.

Now as European correspondent for your newspaper, she is bringing marvelous reports on the French election of Mitterrand, which is inspiring.

This may well be the catalyst that brings about European Independence from the U.S. in a nuclear free Europe and frustrates the direction of Reagan, Haig, Bush and the Pentagon to a nuclear holocaust.

—George A. Beyer
Minneapolis, Minn.

ONLY HOPE?

ALONG WITH MANY THOUGHTFUL leftists, *In These Times* continues to advise work within the Democratic Party as offering the only hope for change in the electoral arena.

The actions of this moribund wing of the corporate establishment would seem to row more hopeless with each passing day. If the Carter debacle and the current congressional performance are not enough, consider California.

The Democratic sponsored AB2131 would remove the Peace & Freedom Party from the California ballot by increasing the number of registered voters required to maintain ballot status. This cynical anti-democratic measure is presented as an attempt to save money. This, in a state that relies on military spending for some 25 percent of its economy!

The Citizens Party is currently involved in a drive to achieve ballot status and would ultimately be affected by this legislation if it passes the state senate. We will not allow corporate cynicism to drive a wedge between progressive forces. Peace & Freedom has been the only electoral voice available in California since the late '60s and we will not stand by while they are driven off the ballot. In protection of the democratic tool, we stand with Peace & Freedom. In opposition to the corporate tool, we stand against the anti-Democratic Party. Concerned leftists take note.

—Frank Scott
Berkeley, Calif.

Editor's note: We do not advise work within the Democratic Party, nor do we view such work as the only hope for change in the electoral arena. We do note, however, that most of the left forces and the bulk of a potential left constituency see the Democratic Party as the best vehicle for the attempt to create a new left majority, of which socialists may be an important part.

GOOD WORK

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR EXCELLENT editorial (*ITT*, June 3) concerning the Reagan administration's despicable attitude toward human rights. As the editorial indicated, the degree of economic democracy, as well as political democracy, must always be considered in evaluating human rights. Right-wing dictatorships in the Third World are characterized not only by a lack of political rights, but also by widespread poverty and an absence of economic rights.

—Allan Keith, Jr.
Mattoon, Ill.

IT SHALL NOT PASS!

I CAN'T LET ROBERT ST-CYR'S LAST paragraph (*ITT*, May 20) pass without comment. "If Ulster were not separated from Scotland by 11 miles of sea water..." But St-Cyr, and Maggie Thatcher and Ian Paisley and Oliver Cromwell and King William of Orange himself cannot change that fact of geography. As you cannot change the fact that in the one general election on the issue, 80 percent of the people of Ireland as a whole voted in 1921 against partition, a vote that was ignored by the British government. As you cannot change the fact that despite Quislings, collaborators and the legally condoned murder and assassination gangs of the Loyalist statelet, the IRA will continue the struggle to liberate the people St. Cyr claims they do not represent.

—Eileen Carey White
New York

MARCOS

AFTER ALMOST NINE YEARS OF BRUTAL repression, rigged elections, phony referendums and plebiscites, the Marcos dictatorship is now trying to stage its new circus act: the June 16 elections.

We of the Alliance for Philippine National Democracy join the national democratic forces in the Philippines, the United Democratic Opposition, and other anti-fascist forces in condemning this election as another trick to perpetuate Marcos' rule.

The January "lifting" of martial law deceived no one—not even the Pope. How can anyone believe Marcos' propaganda that the Filipino people are now going to have a real choice when Marcos and his henchmen still control the media, the electoral apparatus, the military and police, using public money and government agencies to enforce their self-serving decrees?

With more than 2,000 political prisoners still held in jails; with strikes prohibited; with freedoms of speech and

Continued on page 16

IN DEPTH

The Communists and Negro rights

By Max Gordon

FEW PEOPLE ARE AWARE of the Communist Party's role in the origins of the modern civil rights movement, and fewer still know that the groundwork was laid not in the United States, but in Moscow, and not by the party's leadership, but by dissident blacks who appealed to the Communist International when their efforts came to naught at home. All this took place 50 years ago.

The trail of a party member—August Yokinen—for white chauvinism in 1931 began this new period of party activity. But it was the Scottsboro case that became a major civil rights cause. The Communist Party used both events to stimulate and expand a challenge to American racist ideology and oppression. But it didn't do this on its own initiative.

In September 1929 Cyril Briggs, a black Communist, wrote in *The Communist* that the party's struggle for Negro rights had been "seriously and sincerely taken up" only the previous year at the instruction of the Communist International (Comintern) at its 6th World Congress in Moscow. The World Congress, wrote Briggs, had placed a high priority on "an aggressive fight against all forms of white chauvinism within the Party."

It was a fight aimed at the elimination both of anti-black attitudes and at indifference to the struggle for racial equality. Briggs noted that the Comintern's stress on the struggle against white chauvinism had given the party's black members a powerful weapon for breaking through party indifference. In 1928, Briggs reported, several members had been found guilty of white chauvinism and were expelled. In the same period of

time, black membership had grown from 50 to 150.

The Comintern instructions were the result of initiatives from black American Communists, who had enlisted support in Moscow after failing to make headway with their party leadership at home. Blacks had initially been recruited into the CP in 1921, two years after its founding, when Comintern support of revolutionary movements "among dependent nations and those without equal rights" attracted leaders of the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). A 1920 Comintern resolution on the "National and Colonial question" cited American Negroes as a dependent nation, which coincided with the ABB's views. Although few in number, ABB recruits—headed by Briggs, an ex-editor of the New York *Amsterdam News*—were to play an important role in the party.

In 1922, when Harlem poet Claude McKay was invited to address the 4th Comintern Congress in Moscow, he castigated American Communists—and Socialists—for ignoring Negroes because of racial prejudice. Similarly, Otto Hall, an erstwhile ABB leader and one of several blacks at a Comintern school in Moscow in 1925, told Stalin that Communists were failing among Negroes because of their patronizing white chauvinism.

The 6th World Congress of the Comintern set up a 32-member Negro Commission to consider the situation of blacks in the U.S. and South Africa. The Commission included five black and two white Americans. At the Congress general sessions black American delegates James Ford and Otto Hall condemned their party for having failed to act on numerous resolutions on the Negro question.

Two Congress documents and two post-Congress resolutions called for

struggle against white chauvinism, lynching and Ku Klux Klan activity, trade union barriers and for organization of the black "peasantry" and agricultural workers in the South. In regions of majority Negro population, the right of self-determination was asserted. All manifestations of white chauvinism within the party were to be "resolutely and ruthlessly combatted."

The Comintern thus compelled the American CP to give priority to intra-party struggle against white chauvinism and for self-determination of the oppressed black nation, which was seen as

uniquely interracial organization, as Comintern policy demanded, the Party had to challenge the ingrained biases of its members, most of them foreign-born. It had to compel a break with the prevailing mores, which forbade social relations between blacks and whites. The problem became more acute as blacks began to join the party, and as organizations like the Unemployed Councils united blacks and whites around common needs.

Dance drama.

In January 1931, three black youths attended a dance in the party-controlled



Blacks and whites at an International Labor Defense meeting in the early 1930's.

parallel to anti-imperialist struggles in China and India. But the self-determination slogan had little practical application. It was dropped in the mid-'30s, picked up again after World War II and finally put to rest in 1959. Some Communist splinter groups still cling to one or another version of the slogan.

The anti-white chauvinism struggle, on the other hand, had enormous practical effect. To transform itself into a gen-

parallel to anti-imperialist struggles in China and India. But the self-determination slogan had little practical application. It was dropped in the mid-'30s, picked up again after World War II and finally put to rest in 1959. Some Communist splinter groups still cling to one or another version of the slogan.

After intense preparation, the trial was held March 1 in a large Harlem dance hall. It received considerable publicity. A front page *New York Times* story described the hall as jammed long before the trial opened. A thousand were seated and a thousand stood. Hundreds were black. Black and party reporters crowded the press tables. Alfred Wagenknecht, venerable party, union and Unemployed Council leader, presided. *Daily Worker* editor Clarence Hathaway was prosecutor and Richard Moore, perhaps the party's most effective orator and Negro Department Director of the International Labor Defense (ILD)—the party's legal arm—was defense counsel.

A jury of 14—seven black and seven white—was selected from the floor. Yokinen was accused of "conduct detrimental to the interests of the working class" and for "violation of the fundamental program of the Communist Party." Hathaway called for Yokinen's expulsion, with readmission after he demonstrated freedom from white chauvinism by fighting against it in the Finnish Club, leading a demonstration against a Harlem restaurant that barred blacks, joining the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and selling its paper regularly and otherwise becoming active in the party's anti-racist campaign.

Moore depicted Yokinen as a victim

LETTERS

Continued from page 15

press still denied; with the continued arrests, detention, or summary execution of dissenters; with the intensifying genocide of the Moro peoples, Igorots, and other minorities; how can anyone believe that Marcos' martial rule has suddenly changed?

One recent example of continuing oppression is the death penalty arbitrarily imposed on two well-known fighters for democracy and national independence: Bernabe Buscayno, better known as Commando Dante, and Victor Corpuz, a lieutenant of the Philippine Military Academy. We ask everyone to denounce this mockery of justice and demand humane treatment for all political prisoners.

We urge freedom-loving peoples to expose and denounce the farce of the coming elections. We urge everyone to demand the genuine dismantling of martial law and an end to U.S. support of the Marcos regime (through rental of bases).

—E. San Juan
Chair, Coordinating Committee
Alliance for Philippine National Democracy

TOBACCO SUBSIDIES

THIS LETTER IS IN RESPONSE TO ART Llebraz's call for the elimination of federal subsidies to tobacco farmers (*ITT*, April 15).

Such an action would neither reduce the cost or hazards of smoking nor help present smokers to quit. On the other hand, we could expect a concentration of tobacco production into fewer hands and the subsequent loss of a major income source for thousands of low-income Southern farmers. (In Claiborne County, Tenn., where I live, more than \$8 million is sold each year through local warehouses.)

Certainly we would all welcome new cash crops and more equitable market relations to improve our chances for survival. Until that time, leftists should avoid the temptation to propose eliminating the one federal program that has added a degree of stability to an economy characterized by limited job opportunities, low-paying, non-union jobs and capital flight.

—Jon Trautfeld
New Tazewell, Tenn.

IS NOBLE

THE ATTACK ON DAVID NOBLE (*ITT*, May 13) by Stephen Barton is palaver. William Matson Roth's (Matson Navigation Co.) relationship to the M&M agreements between the ILWU and the employers was not one of innocent "association" but guilt by collusion.

In 1957, a National Academy of Sciences committee did the *San Francisco Port Study* to guideline M&M. Union and employer officials were on that committee, knew the costs and did not put them before the ranks.

Early resistance to M&M in San Francisco and Los Angeles was crushed by the firing of 82 in San Francisco and a leading business agent in LA, plus the imposition of a special "yellowdog" contract on LA longshoremen. The first M&M (1960-65) sold most union work rules for a \$7,900 "old timers" bonus.

M&M has killed more than half of longshore jobs on this coast and the ranks who survive have less control due to loss of job rules and undermining of the hiring hall by use of "steadymen" chicken rules one must abide by to get what Barton calls "guaranteed income."

Lincoln Fairley, former ILWU staffer, M&M advertiser, and then M&M arbitrator, now reveals he has deep misgivings (*Facing Mechanization*, UCLA Press, 1979). And, in his report to the Department of Labor, states: "It is now known that Harry Bridges believes the M&M plan to have been a mistake..."

Contributions like Barton's, unlike Noble's, serve to keep the ranks in other industries from learning beforehand the bitter lessons of maritime where containerization is right now being computerized around the Morgan Crane process.

—Stan Weir
San Pedro, Calif.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

of the ideology foisted on society by the "vicious capitalist system," which "spreads slanderous stories of savagery, inferiority, criminality and rape" against Negroes. Moore also accused the party of failing to educate its members properly. He pleaded that Yokinen be placed on probation. Yokinen then confessed his guilt and asked for a chance to rehabilitate himself.

The verdict was expulsion, with readmission in six months under the conditions proposed. Yokinen diligently carried out the prescribed tasks and was readmitted in six months. But the trial came to the attention of the U.S. Immigration Service. Though in the country 13 years, Yokinen had never applied for citizenship. After fighting his case to the Supreme Court, he was deported in 1932.

Scottsboro.

Less than a month after the Yokinen trial—on March 26—the Scottsboro case broke. It drove home Richard Moore's "defense" contention that the system promotes race hatred by spreading slanderous stories of black criminality and rape. Earl Browder later claimed that the case became a *cause celebre* because of the CP's heightened sensitivity on the race issue resulting from the Yokinen trial. There were also more directly related developments.

In response to the Comintern Negro Commission's proposals, the party had opened a Southern Regional office in 1930. Shortly afterward it launched a weekly, the *Southern Worker*, out of Chattanooga. Its legal arm, the International Labor Defense, set up a Negro Department to fight lynching. When ILD officials in Chattanooga spotted a local press item about nine youths, aged 13 to 20, pulled off a freight train and held at Scottsboro for rape of two white women, they immediately notified the CP and ILD offices in New York. All had been picked up for riding freight and all, including the women, had sought to elude the police. Only after they were held did one woman charge rape, with the other corroborating.

The trial opened April 6. The youths were defended by an alcoholic white attorney hired by the Chattanooga Colored Ministers Alliance. Drunk and frightened by a hostile mob of 5,000 outside the courthouse, he refused to proceed, on grounds of unfamiliarity with Alabama judicial procedures. An elderly local attorney volunteered on the spot to assist, without consulting the defendants.

The trial circumstances made little difference. Blacks then accused by white women of rape, when not lynched, were certain of execution after a mock trial. There appeared little reason to believe this would not be the case here—even though one defendant was crippled with syphilis, one was almost totally blind and two were only 13. Eight of the nine were sentenced to death after a three-day trial. The jury deadlocked between life imprisonment and execution for the youngest defendant, resulting in a mistrial.

Two observers attended the trial for the party and ILD. They wired back, after the first day, that it was a "necktie party" and could be another Sacco-Vanzetti case. Wires immediately began to deluge the judge and Alabama governor from party and party-influenced organizations and individuals all over the country. The publicity quickly stimulated protest, organized and spontaneous, from other sources as well. Two leading ILD attorneys went South and soon obtained the agreement of defendants and parents to take over the appeal from the conviction. For some two weeks after the trial the NAACP was silent. It wanted to be certain the youths were not mass rapists. But the ILD's activity forced the NAACP to move and a nasty struggle, which the ILD eventually won, developed over the next year for allegiance of the youths and their parents.

After two Supreme Court reversals of Alabama court convictions—because of inadequacy of counsel and barring of blacks from jury service—and a local judge's courageous tossing out of another conviction because of the absurdity of the testimony—Alabama authorities in early 1938 agreed to free four youths at



Communists used public protests to defend the Scottsboro Boys. The NAACP tried to keep it in the courts.

once and to reduce sentences to varying jail terms for the others, with promises of pardon. Four were pardoned by 1950. Haywood Patterson escaped to Detroit and remained free when Michigan Governor Williams refused to extradite.

The ILD-NAACP conflict, which ended in formation of a single Scottsboro Defense Committee, involved more than organizational competition. The CP argued that the courts were oppressive capitalist agencies incapable of rendering justice and that only massive, continuous

protest could save the youths' lives. The ILD organized a European tour for Ada Wright, the mother of two of the youths, accompanied by ILD head J.L. Engdahl, who died during the tour. Large, often violent demonstrations were held before American embassies throughout the world. There were vast demonstrations in the U.S. particularly in black communities.

The NAACP, on the other hand, relied entirely on the courts and on support of "moderate" whites who were equally court-oriented. Hence mass public expressions of hostility were viewed as serving only to antagonize the powers-that-be. Bitterness between the organizations, to the detriment of the defense, was increased by the Comintern thesis in 1931 that revolution was around the corner and under exclusive CP leadership. Reformist organizations like the NAACP were seen as capitalist bulwarks, as "social fascists," that had to be destroyed.

The CP emerged from the Scottsboro struggle with greatly enhanced reputation among blacks. Its black membership grew from a few hundred in 1931 to about 2,500 in 1934, and some 15,000 by 1939. Other struggles around black needs contributed to this growth, but vilification of black leaders outside of party control and Communist rigidities also greatly limited it.

Initially, the CP tried to go it alone in defense of the Scottsboro Boys. But it soon learned that black communities could be enlisted only through churches, fraternal, social and other such organizations. It thus quickly dropped this stance, while remaining hostile toward the "reformist" NAACP.

The Scottsboro campaign made millions of Americans more aware of the depth of racism and more sensitive to it. It placed the issue dramatically on the national agenda and it made the struggle for equality a personal experience for many.

Max Gordon was an editor of the *Daily Worker*, the Communist newspaper, in the 1940s and '50s.

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INPRINT

VIETNAM

Shrapnel in the veteran's mind

Everything We Had
By Al Santoli
Random House, 265 pp., \$12.95

By Ken Harper

In the several hours it took to read *Everything We Had*, I learned more about what went on in Vietnam than I did in the year I spent there as an intelligence clerk. Al Santoli's oral history of 33 Vietnam veterans, ranging in rank from enlisted personnel to an admiral, fills in many of the pieces of what has come to be an unsolved national puzzle. The overall historical solution is evident: we lost. On a personal level, however, answers become as fragmented and complex as the individuals who experienced the war in his or her special capacity. In the modern army everyone possesses an "MOS," or military occupational specialty.

Santoli has organized *Everything We Had* into a rough chronology spanning the years of the Vietnam War, 1962-1975. What began as a "Nine to Five War," no weekend or holiday fighting, ended in American escape by helicopter from the embassy rooftop in April 1975.

Brutal ironies.

Santoli's interviews articulate the disparities and incongruities that characterized the war. The most striking examples are an Army second lieutenant and a Marine "grunt" whose tours of duty approximated one another's during 1967-68. The former convinced a major to pull him from proposed combat assignments and became an assistant club officer, whose "first job was to go down to Saigon and hire bar girls." The Marine landed in Vietnam, celebrated his 18th birthday, and only then was ordered to Khe Sanh "because you can't go into a combat zone until you are 18."

A helicopter crew chief remembered his favorite hootchmaid, nicknamed "Chrome Dome...because she was bald on top of the head." His wife sent Chrome Dome a salami as a Christmas present, but the Vietnamese woman did not know what to do with it. She preferred gum, which she took as she cleaned hootches. The crew chief understood her "thefts," but another man in his unit did not. "He shot her point-blank through the chest and killed her. Even now, every time I see spearmint gum it blows me right out of the fucking saddle...For a fucking stick of gum."

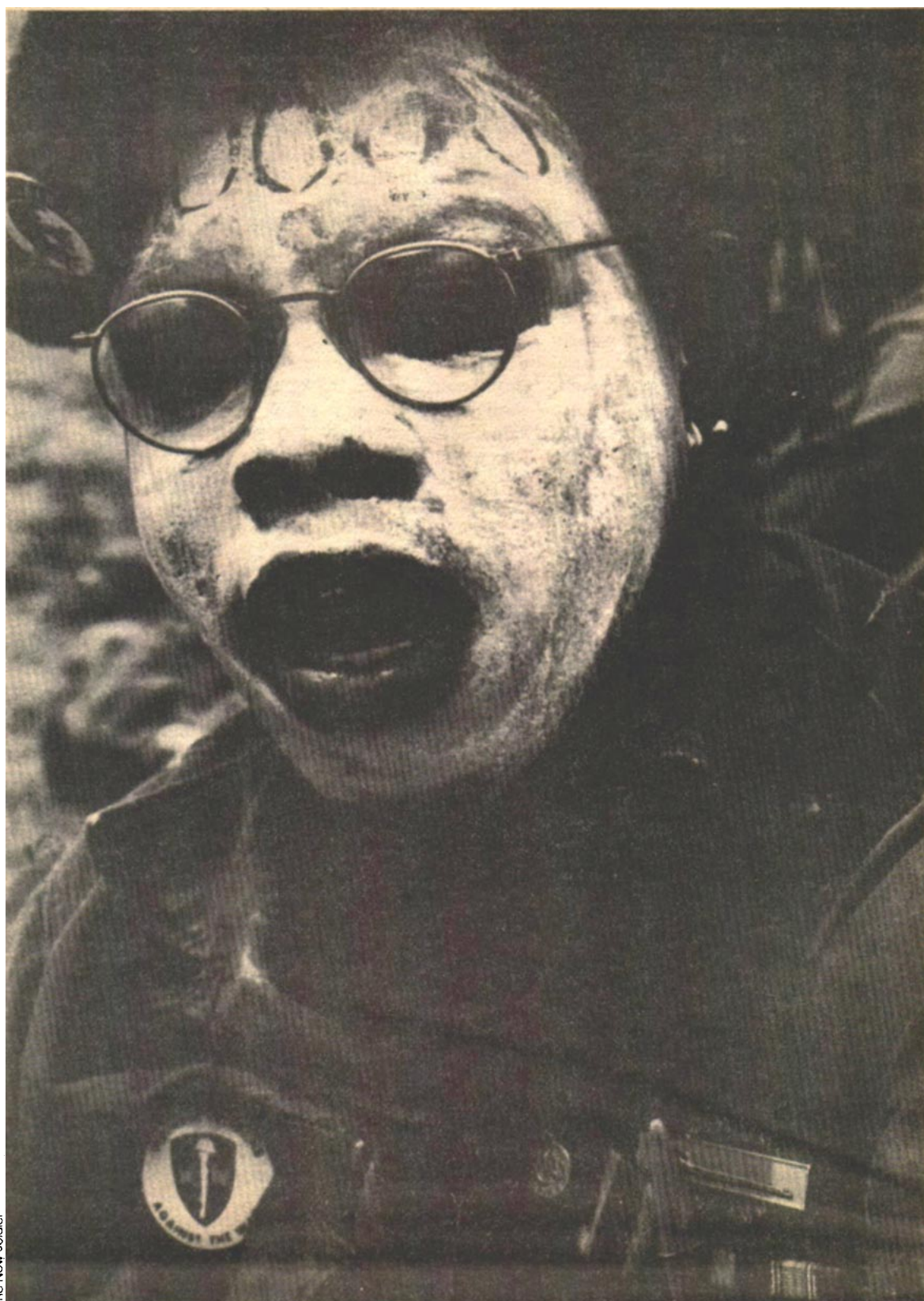
Not all of the stories in *Everything We Had* are imbued with malevolence, mishap or madness. A CIA case officer pointed out that in "underdeveloped" Vietnam there was a highly developed culture. "They thought we were animals. A lot of little things that we took for granted offended them fiercely, such as putting a hand on a head. Sit-

ting with your feet crossed, with your foot facing another person, is a high insult." The rifle platoon leader discovered why he found pine trees in the jungle outside Hue: villagers planted them at the death of a reknowned person so that the spirit could live on.

Grim legacy.

Everything We Had also involves the present and what it implies for the future. Mike Beamon, a former SEAL (the Navy's equivalent of a Green Beret described with chilling detail the absolute control, the stealth, the rote homicide that was a night's work for his assassination squad. After the war Beamon traveled to Guatemala and noted similarities between the situation there and that in Vietnam. "The SEALs go into areas like Central America... and do the training for right-wing guerrilla-warfare units or terrorist units." Remember, the 53 American "advisers" in El Salvador are all naval personnel.

With all there is to *Everything We Had*, quibbling over what is left out may seem questionable. But there are some curiosities in the veterans Santoli selected. Only one black soldier and one Puerto Rican suggest tokenism and a thin effort to validate the "everything" of the title. Of the veterans interviewed (including two women nurses), ten have become professional artists (actors, film makers, writers), seven are lawyers or have advanced professional degrees, and five are involved in Vietnam veterans' programs. Two-thirds of Santoli's group possess impressive credentials for a war fought largely by



A protesting Vietnam vet with American casualty figures written on his forehead.

19-year-olds with high school educations or less. Santoli himself is a playwright as well as a former infantryman in Vietnam with three Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star.

According to a VA study released in March of this year—a study a grassroots New York Vietnam vets organization initiated several years before the VA and the National Institute of

Mental Health sponsored it, and then had to sue the VA in order to make the results public—only 20 percent of Vietnam veterans finished college upon return. More than a third of all Vietnam bombar veterans have been arrested, and unemployment is considerably higher among Vietnam veterans, particularly blacks. Those voices are not heard in *Everything We Had*.

Yet there is plenty to absorb here. This sweeping nonfiction suggests why an encompassing novel on Vietnam has not been written. A specialist's war gives rise to specialty experiences: narrow, strictly defined by circumstances, inaccessible to the non-specialist, a war that was indeed stranger than fiction. ■

Ken Harper is a professional writer.

FEMINISM

The personal and the political



Ellen Willis

Beginning to See the Light:
Piece of a Decade
By Ellen Willis
Alfred A. Knopf, \$12.95

By Ellen Cantarow

I look for Ellen Willis every time I get my copy of *The Village Voice*. I like the mix of authority

and intimacy in her writing, and what I'd call her *resonance*. I don't just read her and say, "Right. Never thought about it that way," and move on. I stop. Then come the associations, personal and intellectual.

Take this quote from one of 28 pieces in *Beginning to See the Light*, a collection that spans most of the period (nearly 15 years) during which Willis has been writing for *The New Yorker*, *Rolling Stone*, the *Village Voice* and elsewhere. "Yet it was men who caused the pain, and if they stopped causing it, they would not have her to dig. In a way their adulation was the cruelest insult of all. And Janis' response—to sing harder, get higher, be worshiped more—was rebellious, acquiescent, bewildered all at once." Reading this I find myself beginning a dialogue: "Yes, and what woman hasn't felt 'rebellious, acquiescent, bewildered all at once,' in

relations with men? I remember when I was 25..."

The piece on Joplin isn't just a set of good perceptions about Joplin, it's a criticism of the notion that sexual freedom for women is really freedom. For Willis what Joplin pushed to its outer limits was sexual subordination, and her appeal was to make that look like power.

Willis' ideas come out of a generation born, roughly, between the late '30s and the early '50s. Of all the intellectual and political movements that shaped this generation, feminism was the one that got deepest into the heart of what was wrong with the ways people live together. Willis is rooted in that feminism as well as in marxism-with-a-small-m, and so while she has talent and a sharp mind she's more than just an excellent critic. She speaks for an era.

Beginning to See the Light includes essays on the Sex Pistols,

abortion, marriage and the family, pornography, Jackie Onassis, Herbert Marcuse, "Easy Rider" and "Alice's Restaurant." As Willis says in her introduction, all the pieces are about the idea of freedom. She finds she likes the Sex Pistols, for instance, because they made "music that boldly and aggressively laid out that the singer wanted, loved, hated...[and] challenged me to do the same...so, even when the content was anti-woman, anti-sexual, in a sense anti-human, the form encouraged my struggle for liberation." She sees through the surface daring—a freedom of style—in Tom Wolfe's writing, to its hollowness. "What bothers me," she writes of "The Truest Sport," which was an essay about Vietnam bomber pilots, "is not that Wolfe didn't write an anti-war tract, but that the issue of whether the war was right or wrong...is not even an

Continued on the facing page

Continued from the facing page
implicit issue.... Wolfe simply
refuses to entertain the possi-
bility that there are times when
style is beside the point."

Politics of sex.

Half the book is about mass cul-
ture. The other half is about pol-
itics, mainly the politics of sex.
The latter is central in what, for
me, is the best essay in the collec-
tion—"The Family: Love It or
Leave It." This is a long, com-
plex, often very personal essay
about the contradictions of liv-
ing with radical feminist ideals in
a time of neo-conservative back-
lash.

The main arguments in it
aren't about the New Right, they're about the New Left and
feminism, and the failure of
both these movements seriously
to examine the nature of sexual-
ity, passion, love. For Willis
marriage and the traditional
family split these off from each
other. The result is that both
women and men are enslaved.
"Under present conditions, het-
erosexuality really is dangerous
for women, not only because it
involves the risk of pregnancy
and of exploitation and margin-
ality, but because it is emotion-
ally bound up with the idea of
submission. And so long as
women are economically depen-
dent on their husbands, they
cannot afford to countenance
the idea that men have a right to
anything as unpredictable as
passion."

For Willis the New Left's an-
swer—free fucking for everyone
—was just a change in the forms
of dominance and submission
with no change in the content.
But feminist redefinitions of
heterosexuality have not done
so either. For instance the wom-
en's movement against porno-
graphy talked a lot about "erot-
ica," but what that often came
down to was an old idea, that
"fornication should be beauti-
ful, romantic, soft, and devoid
of messiness." The emphasis
on relationships, no (yuck)
organs."

Some of the essays in this col-
lection are period pieces (the one
on Dylan, for instance)—they
reflect a time when ideas about
personal and social liberation
were busting loose from the Cold
War. Other pieces, like the fam-
ily essay, carry those ideas for-
ward into the '80s. So taken as a
whole, the book really is a cour-
ageous statement. Reading it
bucks you up.

But it leaves me wanting
more. Willis has a talent for one-
liners, and having clear views is
her forte. But sometimes the
conclusions seem artificial, as at
the end of the family essay: "De-
fenders of the family seem to
think that we have already gone
too far, that the problem of this
painful and confusing time is too
much freedom. I think there's
no such thing as too much free-
dom—only too little nerve."

Too little nerve? Change is
mainly a matter of personal
courage? I'm not convinced.
This essay, like all of Willis' best
pieces, is about conflicts, often
deeply personal ones, and about
the collision between one's
ideals, nobbling and circum-
stances. The most interesting
ideas in the book are about per-
sonal conflicts around sexuality,
the family, relations between
women and men. I understand
Willis is working on a longer
book. I hope it will draw out
such ideas, which are so tantaliz-
ingly introduced here.

Ellen Cantarow writes from Bos-
ton for a variety of alternative
publications. A shorter version
of this review appeared in *The
Real Paper*.

TORTURE

A sometimes silent prophet

**Prisoner Without a Name,
Cell Without a Number**
By Jacobo Timerman
Translated by Toby Talbot
Knopf, 164 pp., \$10.95

By Sheldon Frank

"At dawn one morning April
1977, some 20 civilians besieged
my apartment in midtown
Buenos Aires. They said
they were obeying orders from
the Tenth Infantry Brigade of
the First Army Corps. The fol-
lowing day my wife sought in-
formation at the First Army
Corps and was informed that
they knew nothing of my where-
abouts.

"They uprooted our tele-

ed silent, wondering.

"Was it inevitable for me to
die like this? Yes, it was inevit-
able. Was it what I desired?
Yes, it was what I desired. Life,
children, I love you. Adios, ad-
ios, adios....

"...Ten.' Ha...ha...ha! I
heard laughter. I, too, began
laughing. Loudly. Great guf-
faws."

Jacobo Timerman's 30
months of torture and impris-
onment had begun. Like 30,000
other Argentines since the mil-
itary coup of 1976, Jacobo Tim-
erman had become a disap-
peared person. But unlike most
of the 30,000 Timerman sur-
vived and has written *Prisoner
Without a Name, Cell Without*



Timerman in April 1978, being led out of prison after a year to be put under house arrest.

phone lines, took possession of
our automobile keys, hand-
cuffed me from behind.... They
threw me to the floor in the
back of the car, covered me
with the blanket, stuck their
feet on top of me, and jammed
into me what felt like the butt
of a gun.

"No one spoke. We arrived
at a certain place. A pair of
large doors opened up. They
squeaked. Dogs barked quite
close by. Someone said, 'I feel
fulfilled.' I was taken out of the
car and flung onto the ground.

"A long interval elapsed. I
could hear only footsteps. Sud-
denly, some bursts of laughter.
Someone approached and put
what seemed to me to be the
barrel of a revolver against my
head. He put one hand on my
head and from up close, per-
haps leaning over me, said,
'I'm going to count to ten. Say
good-bye, Jacobo dear. It's all
up with you.' I said nothing.
Again he spoke: 'Don't you
want to say your prayers?' I
said nothing. He started to
count.

"His voice was well modu-
lated, what you might call an
educated voice. He counted
slowly, enunciating clearly. It
was a pleasant voice. I remain-

a Number to bear witness to the
horror. It is a devastating in-
dictment of state terrorism, and
I have quoted at such length to
give some indication of its pow-
er and precise eloquence. A
masterful work of literature, it
is also a seriously flawed book,
often as exasperating as it is il-
luminating.

A large excerpt of this book
filled an issue of *The New York-
er*. Anthony Lewis of *The New
York Times* called it "the most
gripping and the most important
book I have read in a long time"
in his front-page review in the
Times Book Review. Bill Moyers
interviewed him on PBS a few
weeks ago, and on and on. Dur-
ing the Lefever hearings, Timer-

man was in the audience to bear
silent witness against the
nomination. When Sen. Percy
noted his presence in the
chambers, the packed hearing
room exploded into applause.
Jacobo Timerman had become
our nation's conscience.

Controlled fury.

*Prisoner Without a Name, Cell
Without a Number* is a book of
reflections: on torture and im-
prisonment; on Argentine politi-
cal history; on anti-Semitism and
Nazism; on the world's si-
lence. Composed of vignettes,
pieces of autobiography, politi-
cal ruminations, and periodic
jeremiads, it crosses back and
forth in time, perfectly mirroring
the author's own disorderly
mind as he tries to put into
words precisely what happened
to him and what it all means. At
its core, it is about being a Jew in
a nation that resembles Ger-
many in the early '30s. Timer-
man believes that the Holo-
caust has begun again, this time
in Argentina, and after reading
this book it impossible
not to believe it. He acknow-
ledges that most of the 30,000

IN THESE TIMES JUNE 17-30, 1981 19

...clipped prick.' Whereupon
they begin alternating while clap-
ping their hands: 'Jew...
Clipped prick... Jew... Clipped
prick....' It seems they're no
longer angry, merely having a
good time.

"I keep bouncing in the chair
and moaning at the electric
shocks penetrating my clothes.
During one of these tremors, I
fall to the ground, dragging the
chair. They get angry, like chil-
dren whose game has been in-
terrupted, and again start in-
sulting me. The hysterical voice
rises above the others: 'Jew...
Jew...'"

Out of irrational horror, Ja-
cobo Timerman has created art.
But there are three major prob-
lems in this work of political art.

Anti-left prophet.

First, Timerman has little to say
of the role of the Catholic
church in condoning the reign
of terror in Argentina. He writes
of individual priests and nuns
who have put their bodies on the
line, but says almost nothing of
what the Catholic hierarchy
could accomplish by threaten-
ing excommunication to these
Argentine Nazis who consider
themselves good Catholics. Why
is the Church silent?

Second, Timerman partially
trivializes his analysis of the in-
exorable link between right-wing
state terrorism and anti-Semit-
ism by attempting to prove that
anti-Semitism on the left is
equally inexorable, equally
genocidal. I am not claiming
that the left has, either in the
past or the present, treated the
Jews with delicacy and compas-
sion. But when Timerman writes
"left fascism" (his term), his
prose turns strident and mechan-
ical and his argument becomes
merely rhetorical.

Finally, there is his own silence
on a critical issue. The purpose
of Timerman's testimony is to
break silence, to warn the Jews
of another Holocaust. He re-
serves his greatest scorn for the
Argentine Jews who remain si-
lent. He turns prophet, railing
against the leaders of the Jewish
community who refuse to ac-
knowledge the present reality of
state-controlled anti-Semitism.

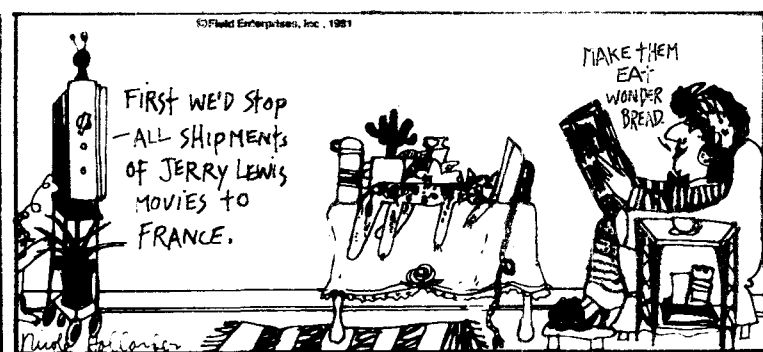
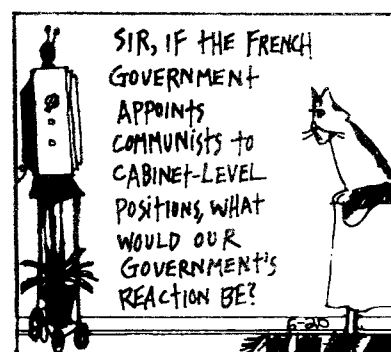
But Timerman is also an un-
wavering Zionist. Is it therefore
a deliberate political decision
never to mention the massive Is-
raeli arms sales to Argentina?
Timerman has spoken about this
issue in interviews, but it is never
mentioned in his book. Why is
he silent? And why is the Israeli
government silent?

I am a Jew and a very reluc-
tant and indecisive Zionist. I be-
lieve that Jews need a homeland
to survive, but there is not much
about Israel that I can tolerate or
justify. I don't know why Timer-
man has chosen silence about Is-
rael's close military ties with Ar-
gentina, but it makes the prophet
turn trimmer, and that makes
me sad and troubled about the
man and the book.

Sheldon Frank has contributed
to *The Nation*, *The New York
Times*, *The Progressive* and oth-
er periodicals.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



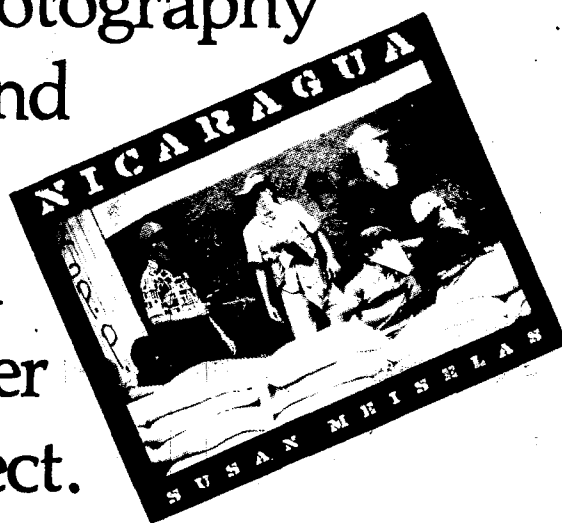
A funeral procession for
assassinated student leaders.



Susan Meiselas

A Revolution

War photography
is changing and
raising questions
about the relation
of the photographer
to the subject.



THE PHOTOJOURNALISM OF SUSAN MEISELAS

By Martha Rosler

Once there was a brutal dictator in a small banana republic in steamy Central America who so abused his people that waves of discontent spread throughout the entire population until finally peasants, lawyers, housewives, businessmen, and even priests and nuns rose up in outrage. Despite incredible atrocities, they eventually succeeded in driving out the beast and his minions, and they looked forward to living in peace forever after.

It would be easy to garner this fairy-tale impression of the Nicaraguan revolution from photojournalist Susan Meiselas' book *Nicaragua* (Pantheon, \$11.95). Meiselas' book is one of the very few journalistic works that are sympathetic to a popular struggle. But the book bears evidence of contradictory aims and approaches, whose collision damages the book's ability to inform and to mobilize opinion.

The movement from photojournalism to art photography travels a well-worn path, but it is a difficult one to negotiate if information is not to fall by the wayside. It is especially difficult

when the situation is not only recent but still at issue. Furthermore, there are disturbing qualities in Meiselas' photographic style that, while grounded in historical trends within photography, have an anti-realist effect.

Mystery and romance.

Pick up the book...at first sight it looks like a catalogue for an art show. On the cover, young men in bandanas crouch or stand against a pink and brown, graffiti-marked wall. Turn the page, and you are being looked at by a close-up face in an expressionless, gauzy mask, seemingly young and male, with a hand on a strand of barbed wire. Mystery.

Central to the book is that the photos are in color. Although color photography is becoming the standard in such magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*, cut loose from their overwhelmingly text-dominated format, a photojournalist work in color is still unexpected, especially when the subject is war.

Color photography is most widely used in advertising. It is often used to portray the exotic, with implications of primitiveness, mysteriousness, romance.

This is *National Geographic* photography, a genre modernized by *Geo* magazine, in whose pages Meiselas originally published some of her Nicaraguan photos. In Meiselas' book the color, while emphasizing the tropical surroundings, the pastel buildings, the intensely blue sky, also calls our attention to the ordinariness of the people shown. This impression is largely conveyed through clothing, which is like *our* clothing. A boy on the cover wears a hat saying "New Orleans;" men and women in summer dress line up, hands raised, facing their bus for a weapons search. With whatever irony we may approach the fashion dominance exercised by the U.S. over Latin America, we can't help apprehend the arbitrariness of war in seeing these eminently "civilian" people.

After the first mysterious images a single page of quotations sets the scene: an intransigent remark by Somoza followed by statements from a Sandinist commander, a lawyer and a rich but despairing economist. The images begin, including Somoza, the National Guard in its training school, a sweating sack-carrier under a glorious sky, a dark-skinned, grimacing woman

in a pink uniform tending rich light-skinned toddlers.

Then the book, in horror-movie fashion, establishes its legitimacy as a book of war photography in a war with very few battles, slamming the viewer with a terrible photo, a lush lake-and-mountain vista on whose hillside is a body clad from the waist down in intact dungarees and from the waist up consisting of nothing but a thick spinal cord with a few stumps and severed hands and naked bones nearby. This grisliest image, partly dependent for its effect on clothing again, becomes the context for the other photos.

There are many other strong images in the book, but few are images of atrocities, though there are a number of photos of fires and burning bodies. War photographers complain that magazine editors demand photos of extreme violence, counterpart to TV's gore-squad coverage of local accidents for the nightly news, and particularly favor photos of fire now that color is the norm. In this Meiselas, or her editor, showed restraint, and most of the photos are of the people, civilian and guerrilla.

Gore and compassion.

Although the increasing nihilism and sensationalism of photojournalism and war photography leave Meiselas far behind, her photos are marked by a noticeable streak of alienation—including the fashion bizarrerie and color fantasia—that place her well within the traditions of modern photography.

War photography oscillates between the ideological poles of gore for gore's sake and exaggerated compassion, in which the anguish and heroism of the photographer command most attention. We should acknowledge Meiselas' bravery, especially since she has recently been wounded in El Salvador, but this is, after all, her chosen work.

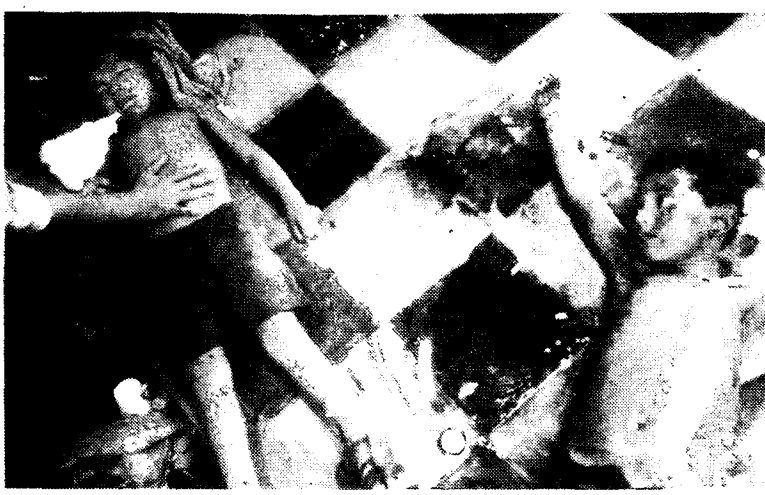
I recently attended a panel of war photographers held at New York's *New School* that began with a memorial showing of photos taken by Olivier Rebbott, shot in San Salvador, who died in Miami a bit later. The panel-

ists expressed confusion about their usefulness. Many said they were pacifists, but they were shaky about their relation to the struggles they photographed. One suggested that as in Method acting, one should adopt a cause and force oneself to take on its values, in order to obtain powerful and passionate images. Other photographers expressed frustration that images of war didn't end war. Cornell Capa, founder of New York's International Center of Photography—as well as brother of the great leftist war photographer Robert Capa, founder of Magnum, who died stepping on a landmine in Indochina in 1954—complained that war used to be blamed on “lack of communication.” Yet since the '30s there has been an inundating amount of information about the horror of war and there are now more wars than ever.

The term “documentary” itself did not appear until the '30s,

isolated in the frame, looking off, moving in diverse directions, or joined in an unfathomable project. The impression of posturing is intensified by the design of the book. The most damaging element of design is the placing of the photos all together in a single section, without captions or text. The captions, some markedly inadequate, appear at the back of the book, accompanying small black-and-white reproductions—just as in an art catalogue—that run alongside the text. Images without the verbal anchoring of what they show can nudge the viewer away from reading out of images toward reading into them. They convert reality into metaphor, and generalize the particular.

The text consists almost solely of quotations from participants, moving testimony about atrocities, battles, victories. There is a wonderfully ironic telegram lampooning Somoza's self-puffery



Dying children rescued from a bombed house.

garet Bourke-White, Marguerite Higgins—is so glibly available. I see it as counterpoint to her refusal in her photographs to probe the psyches of the victims of misery, avoiding the conversion of grief into spectacle, a standard trick of most war photography and much human-interest reportage. Nor does she suggest, as they often do, that war is like a

the photos to War is Hell and Man's Inhumanity.

In the '80s cynicism and the cult of decadence are far more acceptable in the art world than the image of compulsive empathizing on which McCullin's reputation has been built. Le Carre injects a suggestion of a modish chasing after violence in lieu of meaning: “I expect that McCul-

graphed. His point was not the framing of a spectacle, it was the obsessive need to create and to re-create the one telling image, the one that would finally do the work. He expressed embarrassment at Le Carre's introduction. He said he was captive to his editor, who had sat on the book for a year until he found a big name to write. In comparison Meiselas seems lucky to have escaped with no introduction, even though the book cries out for an analysis of Nicaraguan reality.

What the correspondents in conference could not face squarely was the possibility of the meaninglessness of their work or worse, its translation into sentimentality or sports photography. One panelist suggested that photojournalists had to write more of the copy themselves. But most of the panelists rejected this option, as they had others. Why? Because it might damage their saleability or head them toward despair? Was it

In Living Color

a time of social combat over the control of meaning. After that era, in which documentary in the U.S. was anchored above all by the gigantic Photographic Section of Roosevelt's Farm Security Administration, documentary as an expression of ideological commitment declined. By the '60s, documentary was regarded as a bore. Photojournalism, in the service not only of reportage but also for “human

in his captive press, poems, documents and a final chronology. But the list of encyclopedia-style statistics fails to mention anything about the country's economic base (except the people's impoverishment), which is symptomatic of the book. Just as the photos, in avoiding “revolutionary” poses, do not stress collectivity and united purpose, the text omits all mention of political convictions. Even the

natural calamity.

Just how spare Meiselas' book is in relation to the orgies of blood, fire, pain and photographic heroism that form the backbone of war-photo books can be gauged by comparison with another just-published book, Don McCullin's *Hearts of Darkness* (Knopf, \$12.95). The book of black-and-white, gritty, grainy photos, mostly classically composed images of war combatants and casualties, is indeed a catalogue, of an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum late in 1980. This book, too, has its captions collected at the back, and it is explicitly claimed in the introduction by spy-novel writer John Le Carre to be about the photographer: “his work is an externalization of his own fragmented identity.”

Childhood trauma.

After amply establishing, through sexual anecdotes, McCullin's moral superiority to the scruffy crew of war photographers, Le Carre writes of a photo of a dead Vietnamese boy with whom McCullin had shared a foxhole, “If it were a painting, I would call it sentimental; but it isn't, it's life, and it's love outraged, it's a cry of fury from deep in McCullin's feeling heart, but I think he wants me to understand that it's also a cry of fury about his own truncated childhood.”

Most of the photos, from England, Cyprus, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Congo, Biafra, India, Palestine, Lebanon, and Ireland, were taken during the '60s and early '70s. A few landscapes near the end are of his property in the English countryside, shrouded in mist, and a dead sparrow in the snow.

A dead sparrow in the snow? At the New School panel of war photographers, McCullin, a soft-spoken person, showed a strange incoherence about the reasons for taking his photos and about his feelings about war. Now a staff photographer for the London *Sunday Times*, he said he'd rather photograph slums but that the market was slight. As he spoke I began to forgive him a bit for the book, with its blind construction of a photographer-artist-hero, its flattening of all

lin has committed suicide through his camera many times, only to lower the viewfinder and discover himself once again, sane and intact, and obliged to continue ‘a normal life’...perhaps it is...possible to feel nostalgia for physical suffering as a form of human nobility from which our good luck frequently withholds us.”

How does one read such an introduction in conjunction with photos of the dying and the dead, the starving and the destitute, most of whom, dead or alive, are looking right at you from the frame? Le Carre strikes just the right note for the '80s: the photographer stalks the creature given into the arms of death.

Don McCullin meditatively told the audience that he sought out the worst atrocities, for whoever said that a dead body had no use? Its use was to be photo-

really even an option for most of them?

Meiselas, in *American Photographer*, provided a modern rationale for photojournalism—that her photos, appearing almost immediately in American magazines, were quickly seen in Nicaragua and—presumably—served to reinvigorate the rebel cause. Excellent. But it is when one sends one's photos outside the circle of the convinced that the problems begin—problems compounded by publication in book form. For example, the lack of text and choice of design in Meiselas' book enhance a dangerous tendency in the photos themselves, done in a style deriving not only from the “anomic” street-photo tradition but also from the fertile exoticism of fashion photography. ■ Martha Rosler is a video artist who teaches photography at Rutgers University.



Sandinistas at the walls of the Esteli National Guard headquarters.

interest” stories—and, of course, war—kept the photo magazines such as *Life* and *Look* healthy until TV killed them off. (The new *Life* consciously addresses a different audience.) At the same time the more ambiguous, noncommercial tradition of “street photography” produced the Swiss photographer Robert Frank's book *The Americans*. His photos, taken on a Guggenheim-financed American odyssey, could find no U.S. publisher and appeared first in France, in 1959. By the mid-'60s its underground influence was undeniable. *The Americans* portrayed the '50s alienated “lonely crowd,” championing the socially marginalized. With its beat preference for individualism, Frank's work ushered in the overwhelming subjectivization of street photography that still covers its spectrum of tendencies and that marks most other types of art photography as well.

Images without words.

In Meiselas' book we do not often see “people united.” Many of the photos, as in Frank's book, show individuals

naming of political organizations is minimal, hit-and-miss. What, for instance is the G.P.P., whose initials appear on the front cover and elsewhere?

We do not gain a sense of the systematic relation between the U.S.' policies and exploitation of the third world. Further, by inadequately describing the currents within the united front, particularly the mixture of leftist, business and religious interests, by ending the chronology at the moment of entry of the victorious provisional government into the central plaza of Managua, the book fails to build a bridge to the Nicaraguan present.

One of the important messages of most photojournalism is the assumption of the burden of pain, compassion, and bravery that absolves the rest of us. A focus on the war photographer's heroism is a permanent feature of their reputations. Yet *Nicaragua* provides no biographical information about Meiselas, a silence that I assume to be her own. Her refusal to be lionized is particularly admirable for a woman, for the adulation of brave women photographers—Mar-



Photo by Don T. McCullin of Biafran family waiting for food (they were later driven away by soldiers).

CED

Continued from page 9

ic in favor of "cutting edge" analysis and economic democracy.

To Hayden's credit, he is willing to look closely at the nation's changing economic and social structure, then modify his political program accordingly. He embraces concepts like reindustrialization, the microprocessor revolution and the flows of international capital and labor with a speed and enthusiasm that would leave other political groups breathless.

The resulting twists and turns—all under the rubric of economic democracy—may make sense to Hayden and his close associates. But they sometimes baffle the rest of the organization.

The best example at the conference was

Fred Branfman's brief outline of a left military policy. Branfman, now Governor Brown's director of research and a founding member of CED, brought members quickly to the edge of their chairs when he said, "I think we need a military doctrine." He added that "We need to advocate projecting U.S. forces abroad under certain circumstances," and criticized himself and the left in general for promoting "weakness at home and weakness abroad."

That brought several concerned questions from the floor, and some backing down. But later Hayden confirmed that CED has been "toying around" with such a policy, which, he said, has been gaining currency in left circles for the past two years.

"The first reason we're talking about it is the popular image that a strong military is necessary," he said in an interview. "The second reason is that the real military balance in the world has changed a lot in the last 10 years."

Building the organization.

CED plans a statewide membership drive this fall, complete with professional canvassers and a strong direct mail program guided by "geo-demographic analysis." At the same time, CED's supporters in the black and brown communities seem unconcerned about the organization's current membership base.

"My interest in CED is Tom Hayden's success in the white community, not in the ghetto," says Ken Msemaji, president of the independent United Domestic Workers in San Diego and one of the few blacks at the CED conference. "There isn't anything he can do in the black community. But in coalition, CED creates a power apparatus within the Democratic Party that can be shared. Everybody gets something, and we can all say 'no' to one another on specific issues. This is one of the healthiest coalitions I know about."

A longtime Hayden ally, Msemaji shifted from black nationalism to union work with the help of CED supporters Cesar Chavez and community organizer Fred Ross. Msemaji now represents 2,800 domestics in Southern California, and says that "CED is more important than black power."

Tony Estremera, a young Chicano attorney on the CED steering committee, sees the coalition working in much the same way in the brown communities. Campaigning for the city council in San Jose, Estremera told the young whites who applauded him, "I can assure you that Chicanos in this state will be progressive, economic democrats."

Estremera, like elected councilmembers in Chico, Davis, Bakersfield and Santa Monica, knows that he can count on hundreds of young CED workers to help him get out the vote on election day. That influx of campaigners is ultimately the coalition's strength, and CED's ticket to respectability up and down the state. "Campaign" is the most important word in CED," Chico supervisor Jane Dolan says.

Hayden

Continued from page 9

partly because of our prodding and pushing and participation—solar energy, resource conservation and pension fund investments. It's a dynamic where we keep our independence and our program, but we recognize that we can get an awful lot of things done in alliance with the Governor's office.

What's your assessment of CED membership right now?

As far as the racial make-up goes, America is not an integrated society. There are no integrated organizations in America, or I would join one. I see that as sort of a false issue. The issue is, here we have a lot of progressive political activists from working-class/middle-class backgrounds, and what kind of coalitions can we build with the poor, with racial minorities, with seniors, with labor? I don't think it's possible to put that diverse set of constituencies under one tent.

Are you ever afraid that the Democratic Party will eat you up?

No, I don't taste very good. The Democratic Party is not the old patronage machine. It has gums, but it doesn't have teeth.

The serious problem is the tension between moving to the center and moving to the left at the same time. It gets people into deep arguments about whether going this far is selling out, how do you preserve your identity, are you losing your cutting edge?

But in a certain sense, that's healthy. It's like taking a daily check of where you are. We want to stand for very principled politics. We have enough confidence in our principles to carry them into larger arenas, like the Democratic Party or elections.

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CALENDAR

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NEW YORK, NY

June 19

No More Witch Hunts: A Day of Resistance. Say no to McCarthyism. There will be an anti-repression celebration with music and information booths from 4-7:00 p.m. and a program with Holly Near, Anne Braden, Michael Meeropol, Helen Rodriguez and others from 7-11:00 p.m. At District 65-UAW, 13 Astor Place (near Broadway and 8th St.). For more information, call (212) 477-3188.

June 22

Save the Freedom of Information Act. Fund for Open Information and Accountability benefit dinner. Paul Robeson Jr., John Henry Faulk, Ruth Messinger, Judy Gorman-Jacobs. 7 p.m., Top of the Gate, Bleecker & Thompson Streets. \$25. For reservations call (212) 477-3188.

June 25-26

Annual conference of League for Industrial Democracy. June 25, 7:30 p.m.: forum, "The Free Market and the Welfare State." Representative Jack Kemp and Gus Tyler. June 26, 10:00 a.m.: "El Salvador: Which Way for the Democratic Left." Penn Kemble and Ronald Radosh. All sessions at the Waldorf-Astoria. Information: League for Industrial Democracy, 275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001, (212) 989-8130.

CHICAGO, IL

June 19

A broad coalition of Chicago organizations concerned with the revival of McCarthy period tactics has picked "No More Witch Hunts" as the theme for an evening in defense of democratic rights in the 80's. Featured will be author Victor Navasky and Congressmen Harold Washington and entertainers Judy Roberts and Kristen Lems. Friday at 8:00 p.m. at the Pick Congress Hotel Windsor room. For more information call (312) 939-0675.

June 20

Join the fight against high interest rates. The Federal Reserve Board is coming to Chicago. Help make them accountable for American home financing. Public meeting with the FED, St. Sylvester's School, 3027 W. Palmer, 12-4 p.m. Call National People's Action at (312) 243-3038 for more information.

June 27

Rally to launch petition drive to create single member districts for Cook County Board. Speakers will include Dr. Quentin Young and Don Rose. Music will follow. At the Bismark Hotel, 171 W. Randolph in the Green Briar room at 2:00 p.m. Call (312) 332-2066 for more information.

MILWAUKEE, WI

July 29-August 2

1980's: New Opportunities/New Dangers—10th Annual NAM (New American Movement) Convention. Speakers include Roberta Lynch, Michael Harrington, Aqbal Ahmed, Michael Lerner, Heidi Tarver, Barbara Ehrenreich, Carl Marzani, Dorothy Healey. Concert with Kris Lems. Join us at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. For registration information: NAM, 3244 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 871-7700.

Movies

Continued from page 24

by Goncharov.) He has, in fact, taken many liberties, some of them in erotic matters. Tampering with a Russian classic and slipping in some sex: now that is enough to knock the socks off the Soviet culture bureaucracy.

Mikhalkov and his collaborating

script writer Aleksandr Adabashyan have eliminated large chunks of the novel, introduced their own scenes, and reduced the number of characters. Moreover, they have purged the sociological explanation for Oblomov's malady. His problems are sexual and stem from unfulfilled mother love, not from the institutions of his class. As for the sexual problem itself: is it impotence or fear of homoerotic inclination? Mikhalkov suggests both. In one scene Oblomov and Olga take shelter in a gazebo during a thunderstorm. In the original,

Goncharov describes Olga as having some kind of seizure—heavy breathing, hot tears, and convulsive movement of her hands. Perhaps Goncharov implied it, but Mikhalkov is unambiguous: she is having an orgasm. Oblomov stands by with a shy, awkward look. The scene proves that some of the most erotic performances in cinema take place when the characters are fully clothed.

In another scene, added by Mikhalkov, the two characters are unclothed: Stolz and Oblomov in a bathhouse, the former flashing his musculature, the latter all

flab. Stolz embraces Oblomov, who objects vehemently. Is there more to the relationship than the warm male friendship that meets the eye?

This is, I think, radical stuff for the Soviet cinema. Can you imagine what Mikhalkov could do with Dostoevsky? ■ *Louis Menashe teaches Russian history at the Polytechnic Institute of New York. The films, screened in this country mostly at film festivals and independent theaters, are produced by Mosfilm and distributed by International Film Exchange, New York.*

CLASSIFIED

PUBLICATIONS

48 BIBLICAL CONTRADICTIONS. \$2.00. Discovery, Box 20331-ITT, WVC, Utah 84120.

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS—National Weekly. News of Lavendar Left; International gay news. Feminist, non-profit. \$8/12 issues. GCN, Dept. INT, 22 Bromfield St., Boston, MA 02108.

"HISTORY OF WORK COOPERATION in America," the radical collectivist tradition. \$4.25. Homeward Press, P.O. Box 2307, Berkeley, CA 94702.

FREE SPEECH and racist agitation; when is a word a deed? A respected linguist on free speech. Zionism and the Holocaust—\$2.00. Clarity Press, 175 5th Ave., 1101T, NYC, NY 10010.

JUNE, JEWISH CURRENTS, "Jews and the Left: a Symposium," Charny, Gluck, Leibman, Schappes, Slavin, Yebb, Gerald Stillman, "The Soviet Yiddish Culture That Was Destroyed." Editorial: "Israel's Crucial Election." Max Rosenfeld, "Combating the KKK." Single copy \$1. Subscription \$10 U.S.A. Jewish Currents, Dept. T, 22 East 17th St., NYC 10003. New pamphlet "Soviet Jewish Situation," Gordon, Harap, Magli, Resnick, Schappes. \$1.

CORPORATE CAPTIVITY OF THE Church—32-page book documenting church's ownership by and of corporations. Seven myths about corporations countered. \$2.00 pp. Zacharias Collective/10, 4527 N. Malden, Chicago, IL 60640.

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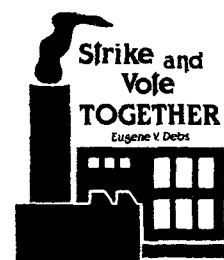
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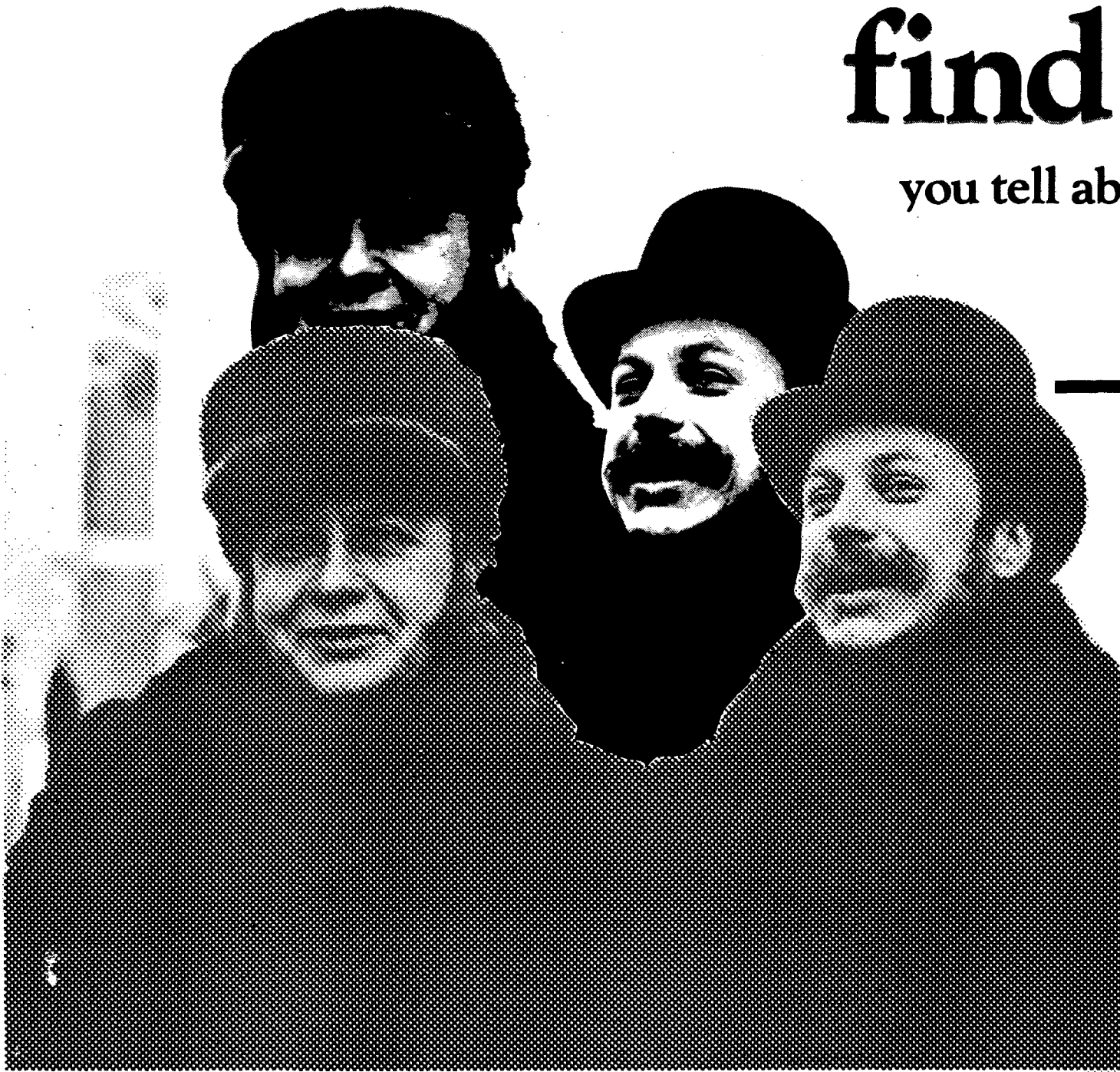
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A good man is hard to find

How much can you tell about Soviet culture by going to their movies?



Oblomov's (left, Yury Bogatylyev, with Oleg Tabakov) problems get a new interpretation in this film version of the classic novel.

in Russia.

By Louis Menashe

SEEING A SOVIET FILM IS LIKE visiting the USSR—one is always on edge, politically. The faucet leaks in your hotel bathroom? Hmmm; so much for socialist technology. *Oblomov*, a classic of Russian literature of the 19th century, has been filmed for the first time? Hmmm; the Soviet cultural apparatus must have something up its sleeve.

Not every leaky faucet is a commentary on Soviet socialism. Not every Soviet film is a political manifesto. Yet the political mystique of the USSR is still so strong that insinuating ideological judgments into all Soviet phenomena is unavoidable. This helps relieve the boredom of watching *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, voted an Oscar by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences this year as the best foreign film of 1980. *Oblomov*, by contrast, stands on its own feet aesthetically, as a film of stunning visual beauty and haunting lyricism.

The first ideological question prompted by *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, a banal and occasionally charming film about three young women from the provinces trying to make it in Moscow from the late 1950s through the 1970s, is why did it get an Oscar? It would be nice to think that Hollywood was opting for detente. That is far-fetched. In *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, Hollywood

probably saw the reflection of its own image. It is a Soviet clone of dozens of American films, past and recent. You'll think of *Three Coins in the Fountain* or *An Unmarried Woman*. I kept seeing Shirley Maclaine, Candace Bergen, and Goldie Hawn in Moscow, and Burt Reynolds too.

The film begins promisingly enough in the style of early Italian neo-realism—a workers' dorm in Moscow in 1958 with lots of women hanging about in slips and housecoats, wisecracking and teasing, musing on their hopes and disappointments. These are the post-Stalin, Krushchevian '50s and the mood is buoyant, optimistic. Into the complicated '70s we follow three of these women along the road of hard knocks—Liudmila, comically maladroit in chasing men of rank and wealth; the hard-working and introspective Katerina, whose every embitterment hardens her will to success; and the simple, unambitious Antonina.

Out of one predictable situation into another they go: lots of laughs, lots of tears. Antonina, the plain one, settles for a plain man and a plain marriage with no complications. Liudmila lands a hockey star who soon falls apart, an alcoholic. She is doomed to loneliness, ogling unavailable men. Katerina is seduced and abandoned by a suave and weak-willed TV cameraman whose child she decides to keep. Katerina's hard lot—her ephemeral affairs, her daily grind caring for her daughter and scaling her way up to the directorship of a large industrial enter-

prise—occupies most of the film. Liudmila sees men as the ticket to success and fails; Katerina is determined to make it on her own, and succeeds. But when along comes Mr. Right, an unconventional worker-intellectual named Gosha and portrayed with zest by the celebrated Alexei Batalov, she cowers like a school-girl before his bluster. She is afraid of losing him.

Katerina's story includes another measure of social criticism in the form of a redefinition of the traditional Positive Hero. Gosha—even his name is unconventional—is a worker to be sure, but off-beat, ferociously honest and principled, someone who eschews the acquisitive habits of fellow Muscovites. His idea of a good time is a *shashlik* picnic in the open country with some friends. (The picnic scene is also Menshov's one offering of trendy cinematography: lots of movement, fast cutting, and close-ups with just music on the soundtrack.)

I've heard that Russians like *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* because of the frank presentation of the evolution, not always for the better, from the struggling '50s to the swinging '70s. The TV screens got bigger and bigger, but so did alcoholism, the generation gap and the assorted alienations of urbanization. There is a wonderful scene at a social center for singles where the woman in charge, in a deadpan way reminiscent of Lily Tomlin, enumerates many of the ills of the metropolis.

How will they be solved? Not by tears,

certainly: Moscow doesn't believe in them. But Moscow does believe in something else, as this film proves. It is wholesome; some find it tasty; and it is called *schmaltz*.

In *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* there is a perfect cameo performance by Oleg Tabakov, playing the married man with whom Katerina is having an affair. It's as if Gielgud or Ralph Richardson put in an appearance in an ordinary film. The same Tabakov reveals the full range of his talents as the title figure in Nikita Mikhalkov's remarkable film, *Oblomov*.

Readers of Goncharov's masterpiece remember Oblomov as the pure-hearted gentryman who suffers from disaffection, anhedonia, and neurasthenia. He is neurotically indolent, has trouble with women and is a hypochondriac. For many Russians of Goncharov's day and silence, Oblomov is their national type, regardless of class. He is lazy, timid, passive and filled with self-doubt. But he is also in quest of the very Russian (and untranslatable) *pokoi*—unruffled serenity and repose, something he savored as a child amid the pleasant torpor of the ancestral estate in the provinces.

Beginning with a famous essay by the critic Dobrolyubov in 1859, Goncharov's book has been seen as an indictment of Russian backwardness, particularly the institution that created the slack-willed and dependent Oblomov—the master-serf relationship. (Oblomov never even had to put on a pair of socks by himself.) "Oblomov" and "Oblomovism" entered the language. Lenin in the '20s: "The old Oblomov has remained, and for a long while yet he will have to be washed, cleaned, shaken and thrashed if something is to come of him."

That stern Leninist sensibility is nowhere present in Mikhalkov's film, which amounts to—daringly—a reverie for Old Russia. Mikhalkov uses light, shadow, color and texture more artfully and less self-consciously than in his earlier *A Slave of Love*, which introduced his work to American audiences a few years ago. (It also introduced Elena Solovey, who has the most magnificent jaw since Julie Christie.)

Pavel Lebeshev's camera tracks gracefully across the facade of a pastel-colored building in old St. Petersburg as it follows a sleigh moving over the snow. The camera also delights in guiding us from half-lighted interiors to the brilliant outdoors. Scenes are introduced by line drawings done in the 19th century manner. In one episode Oblomov's friend Stolz, whose bosom combines the heartbeat of Russian generosity with German discipline, introduces a foreign contraption, a tricycle. The result is a romp by Olga, Stolz, and Oblomov—a joyous and melancholy *menage a trois* recalling Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*. (Or is it the bicycle scene from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* that Mikhalkov is quoting?)

These effects show us incidentally that Soviet film art is not sealed off from nourishing influences from the West. But they are not what makes Oblomov special. Mikhalkov has taken *Oblomov* and embroidered it in his own way. (The Russian title for the film is "Several Days in the Life of Oblomov" based on the novel

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